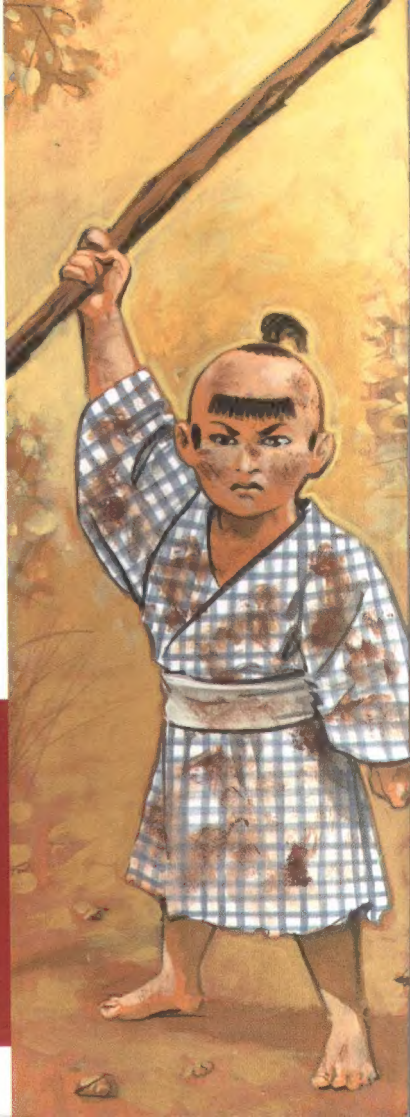
LONE WOLF AND CUB

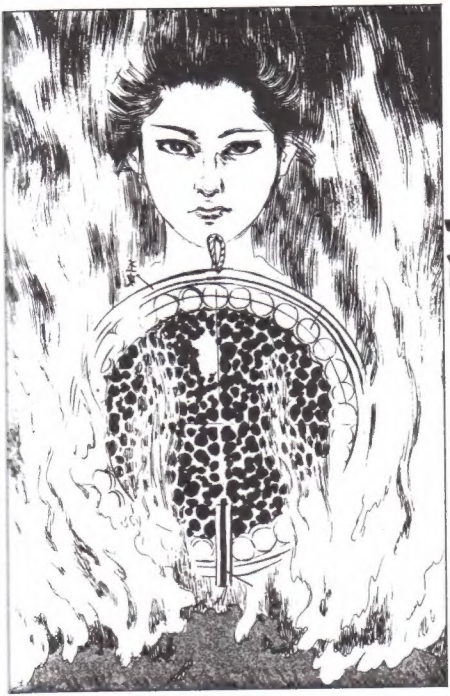
子連れ狼

VOLUME 25

PERHAPS IN DEATH

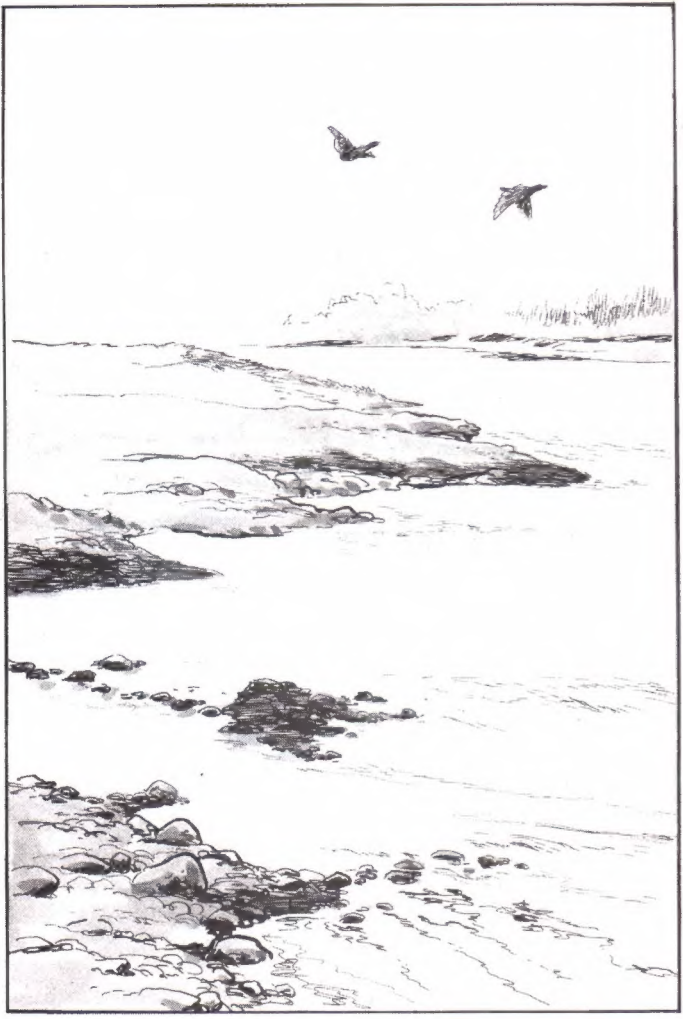
By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

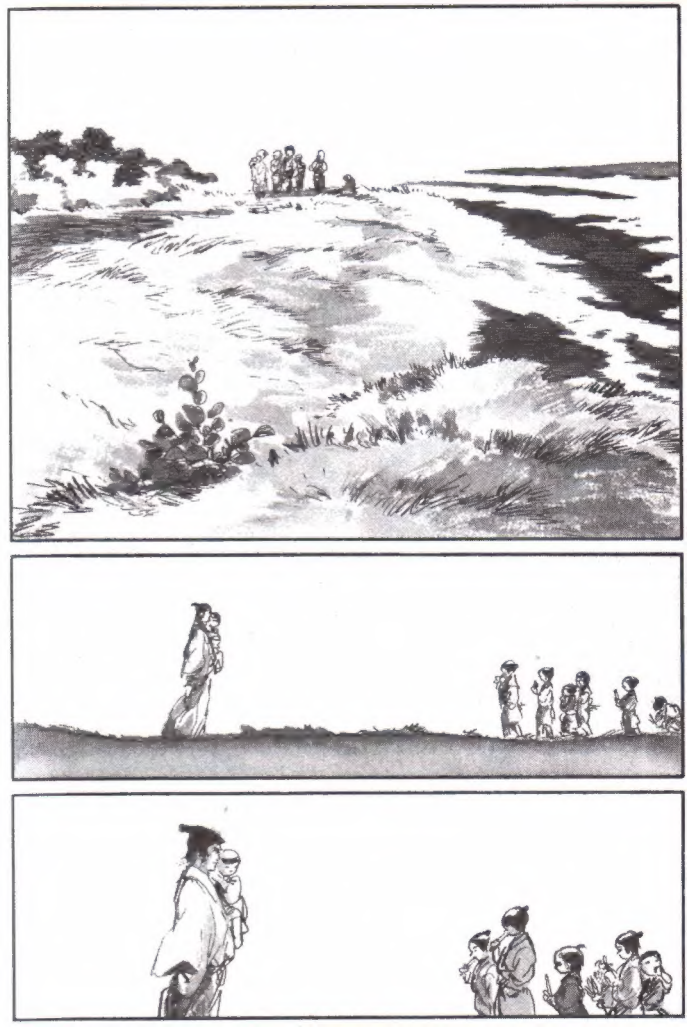




the hundred and twenty-second

Perhaps in Death





Kanカン
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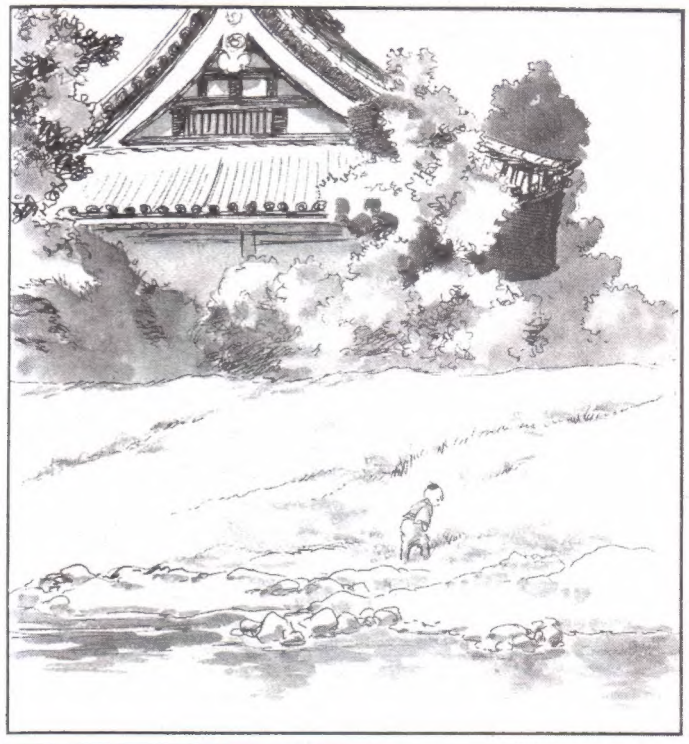
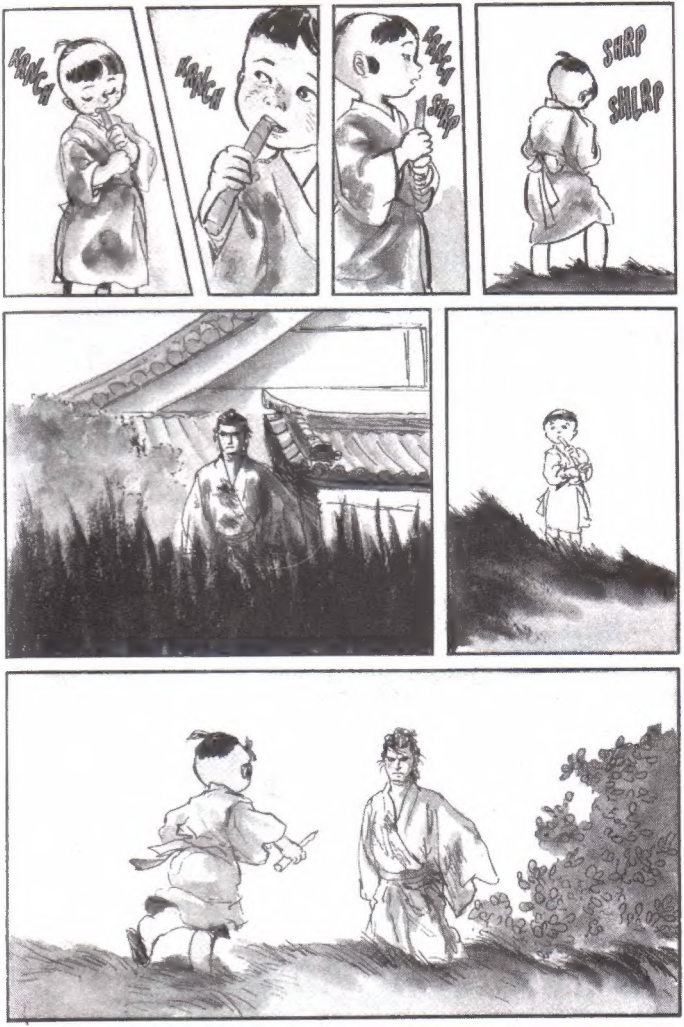
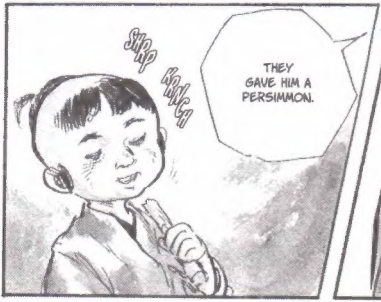


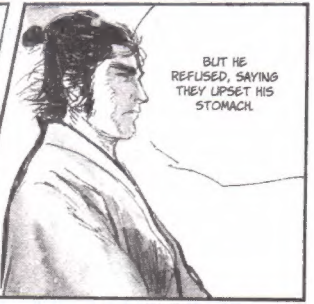

KOKOCH
KOKOCH
SHIP
SHARP
SHARP

SLURP
SLURP

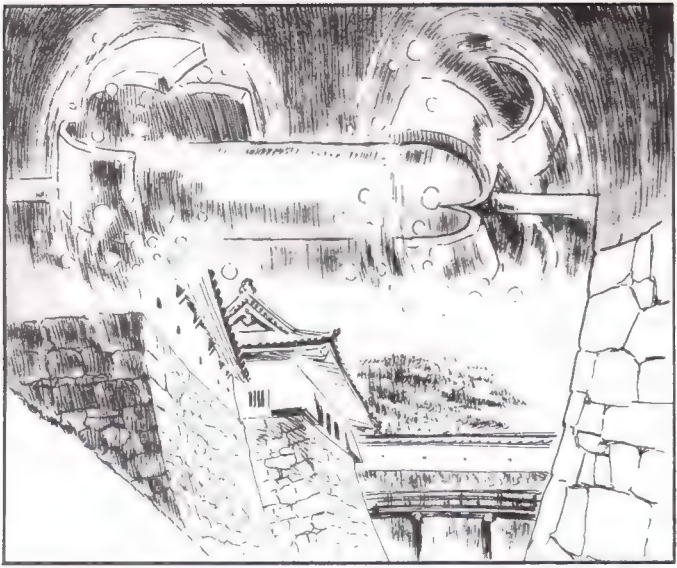
KRUNCH
SLURP
DAI-
GORO.

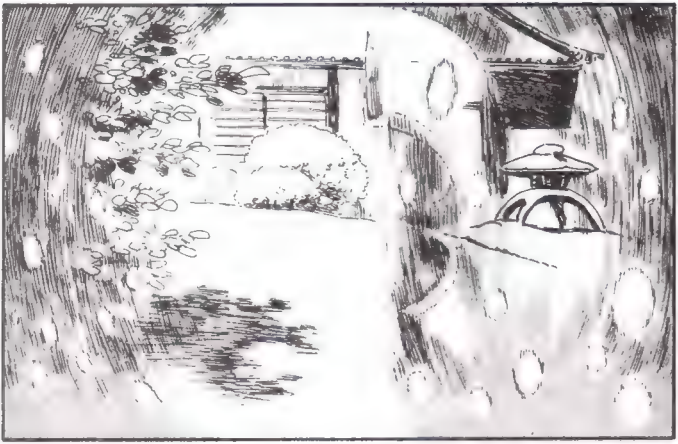
IN THE ERA OF SENGOKU, GENERAL ISHIDA MITSUNARI WAS TO BE BEHEADED AT DAWN.
KRUNCH
KRUNCH


SLURP
KRUNCH
THEY GAVE HIM A PERSIMMON.


BUT HE REFUSED, SAYING THEY UPSET HIS STOMACH.

HIS ENEMIES MOCKED HIM, SAYING HE SHOULD WORRY FOR HIS HEAD.
BUT MITSUNARI REPLIED, "UNTIL I DIE, I LIVE. A GENERAL PROTECTS HIS BODY."
UNDERSTAND, DAIGORO?
MITSUNARI LIVED TO FIGHT. HE WATCHED FOR A CHANCE TO HIS LAST BREATH.
TOMORROW IS OUR LAST DAY.
A WARRIOR WOULDN'T EAT SOMETHING THAT COULD MAKE HIM ILL.

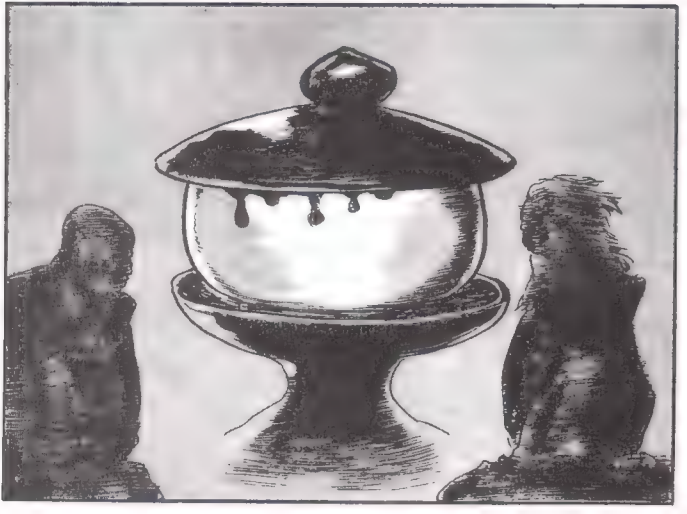


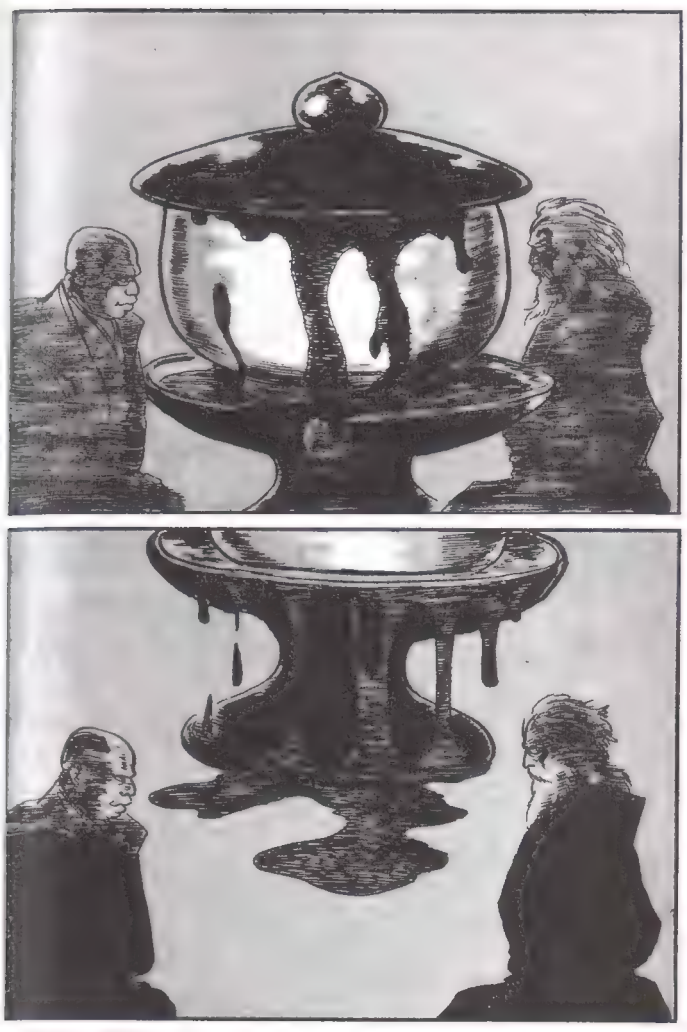


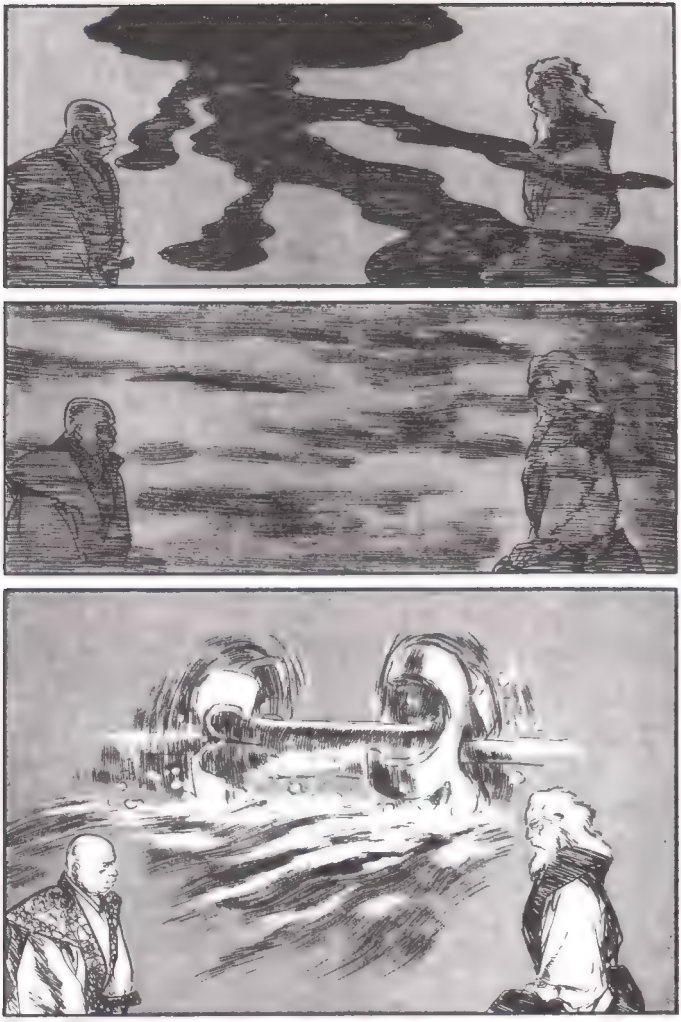
EDO CASTLE,
HONMARU
CENTRAL KEEP:
OKASHI-NO-MA
ROOM

A MAN'S LIFE IS LIKE THE WATERWHEEL OF REINCARNATION.
ISN'T IT THE *TRUTH*, RETSUDŌ-SAMA?

SPINNING IN LIFE'S CURREAT...
AROUND AND AROUND...
WE CAN'T FIGHT IT. WE SPIN UNTIL WE DIE.
PLEASE... HAVE SOME TEA.
HEE HEE!

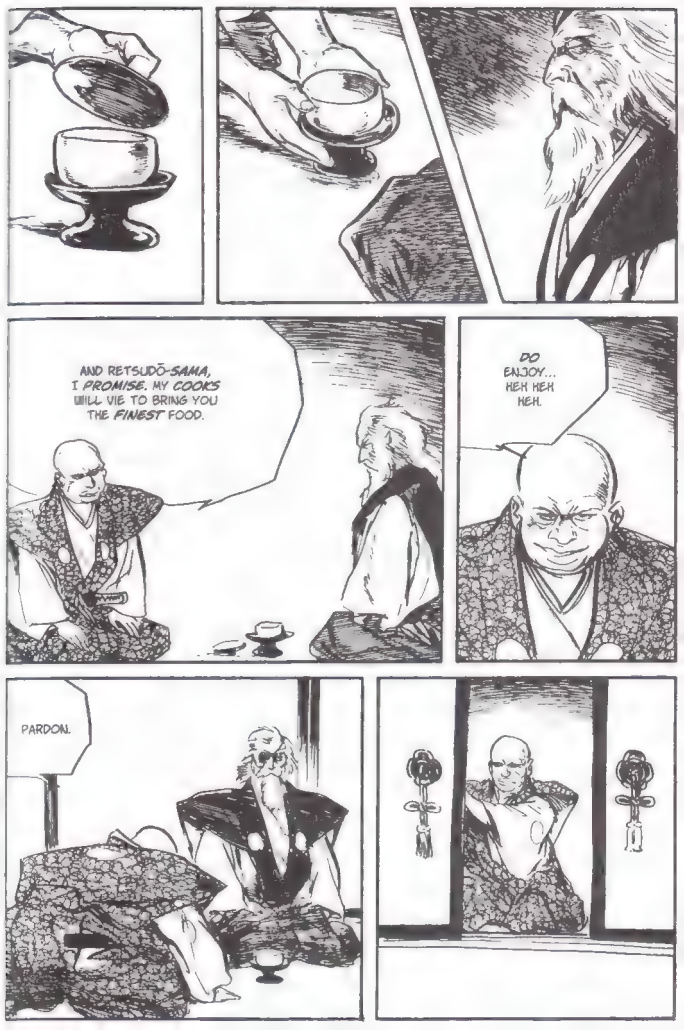


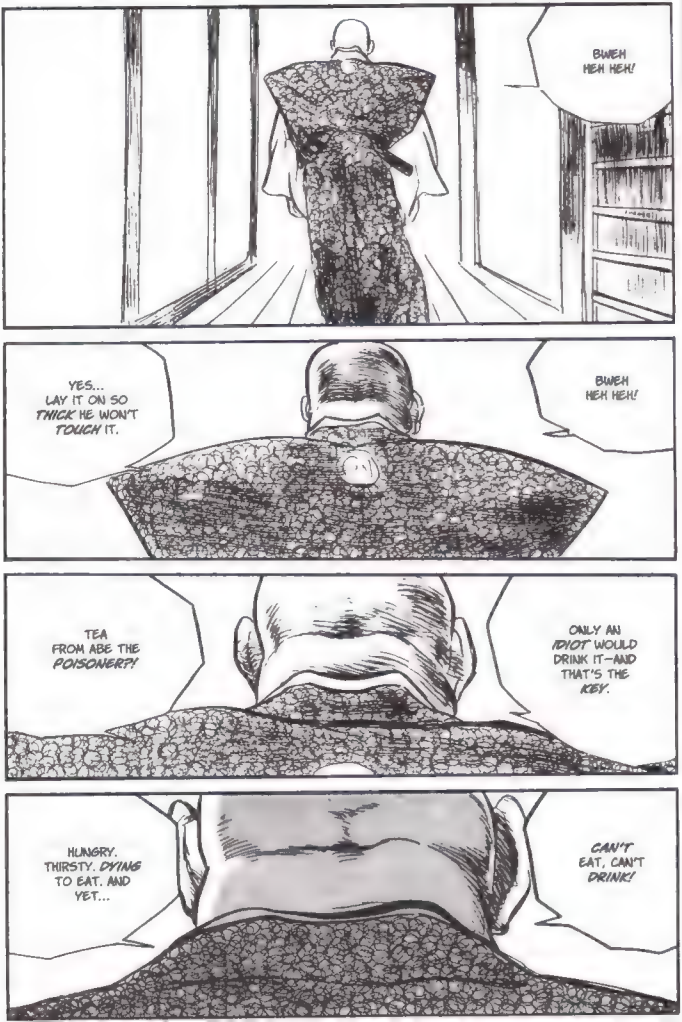




JUST THE OTHER DAY, YOU SAVED *MY* LIFE AND CARED FOR ME AT YOUR ESTATE. AND NOW, I TAKE CARE OF *YOU*.
HEH HEH... THE TWISTS OF FATE...MAKES YOU *DIZZY*.
IT'LL GET *COLD*.
FRESH-ROASTED TEA. IT'LL PERK YOU UP, MM?

ALAS, IN THE HONMARU...
...I HAVE JUST THIS OKASHI-NO-MA ROOM FOR PARTAKING OF TEA AND SWEETCAKES, PLUS THE ROOM NEXT DOOR, A KITCHEN, SAKE AND FISH ROOMS.
NOT EXACTLY YOUR STYLE, RETSUDŌ-SAMA... NOR MINE.
WHEN OUR LORD SPEAKS, WE MAKE DO.
GALLING, I KNOW, BUT PLEASE... PATIENCE.


AND RETSUDŌ-SAMA, I PROMISE, MY COOKS WILL VIE TO BRING YOU THE FINEST FOOD.
DO ENJOY... HEH HEH HEH.
PARDON.

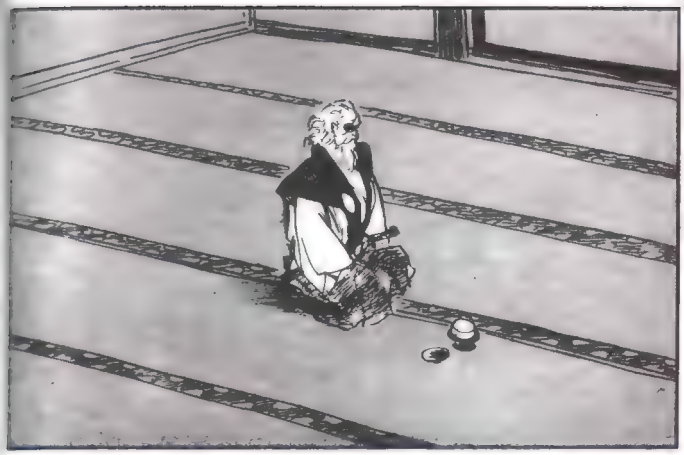

BWEH HEH HEH!
BWEH HEH HEH!
YES... LAY IT ON SO *THICK* HE WON'T *TOUCH* IT.
TEA FROM ABE THE *POISONER?!*
ONLY AN *IDIOT* WOULD DRINK IT—AND THAT'S THE *KEY.*
HUNGRY. THIRSTY. *DYING* TO EAT. AND YET...
CAN'T EAT, CAN'T *DRINK!*

HE'LL STARVE! THIS TIME HE'S DEAD FOR SURE!
HE KNOWS HIS POISONS, BUT IT WON'T HELP HIM. BECAUSE...THERE'S NO POISON! HEE HEE!
SINCE I BOTCHED IT THE LAST TIME, HE'LL EXPECT ME TO TRY SOMETHING DEADLIER, HARDER TO BLOCK..
HE WON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.
HEE HEE HEE! AND YET, THERE'S NOTHING!
IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO RETSUDŌ AFTER OUR LORD TRUSTED ME, I'D BE FINISHED.

BUT IF HE STARVES HIMSELF TO DEATH, I'M CLEAN.
THEY'LL SAY HE DIED TO ATONE FOR HIS SINS.
ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY WON'T FIND POISON!
OUR LORD ASKED FOR ŌGAMI.
BUT UNTIL RETSUDŌ CROAKS, HEH HEH...
...I SAY I CAN'T FIND HIM.
JUST BUY TIME
BUT WAIT!

THIS IS YAGYŪ RETSUDŌ!
WHAT IF HE FIGURES IT OUT...?
SEES THAT I CAN'T POISON HIM, AND SCARF EVERYTHING DOWN.
HMM...
AH!
THEN THAT'S EVEN BETTER!

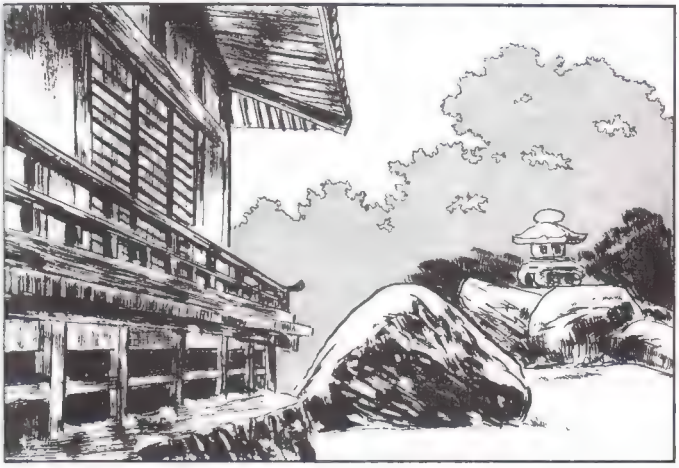
THEN I CAN POISON HIM, BUT... AH!
VIPER VENOM! IT'D KILL A HORSE...AND IT'LL LOOK LIKE SUICIDE!
THE SEIZURES WILL MAKE HIM BITE OFF HIS OWN TONGUE!
WAH HAH HAH!
ANY WAY YOU SLICE IT, HIS TIME'S UP!
HA HA HA!
WAH HAH HAH!

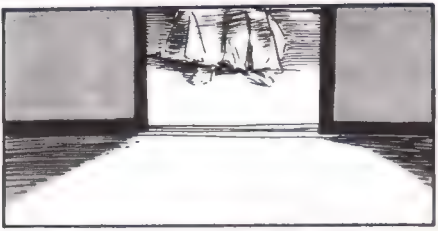


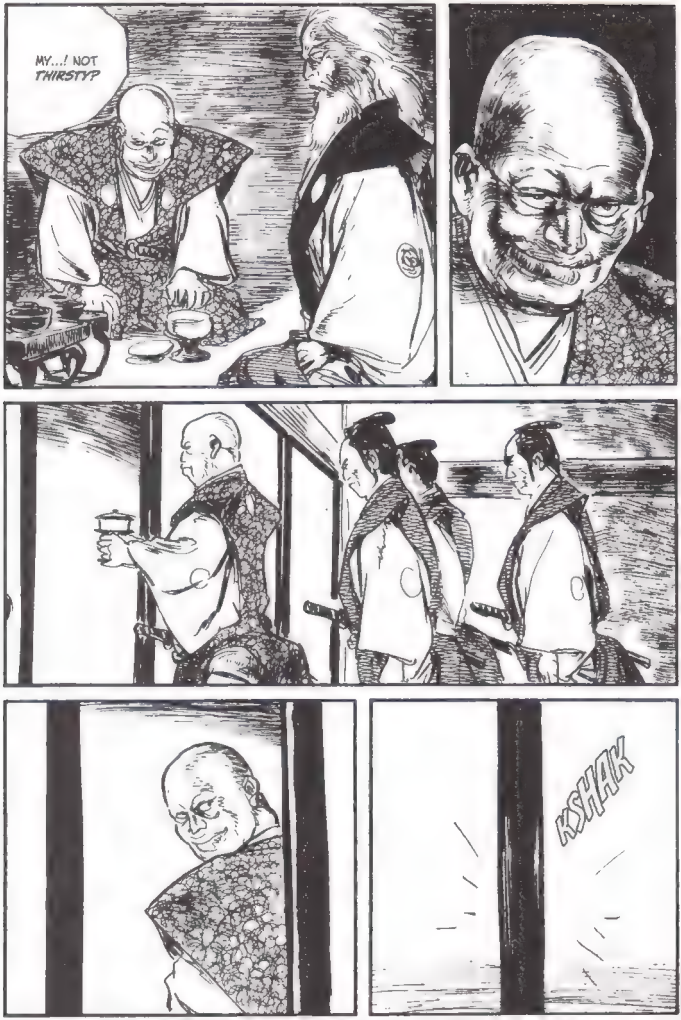
HEH HEH HEH...
HEH HEH HEH!

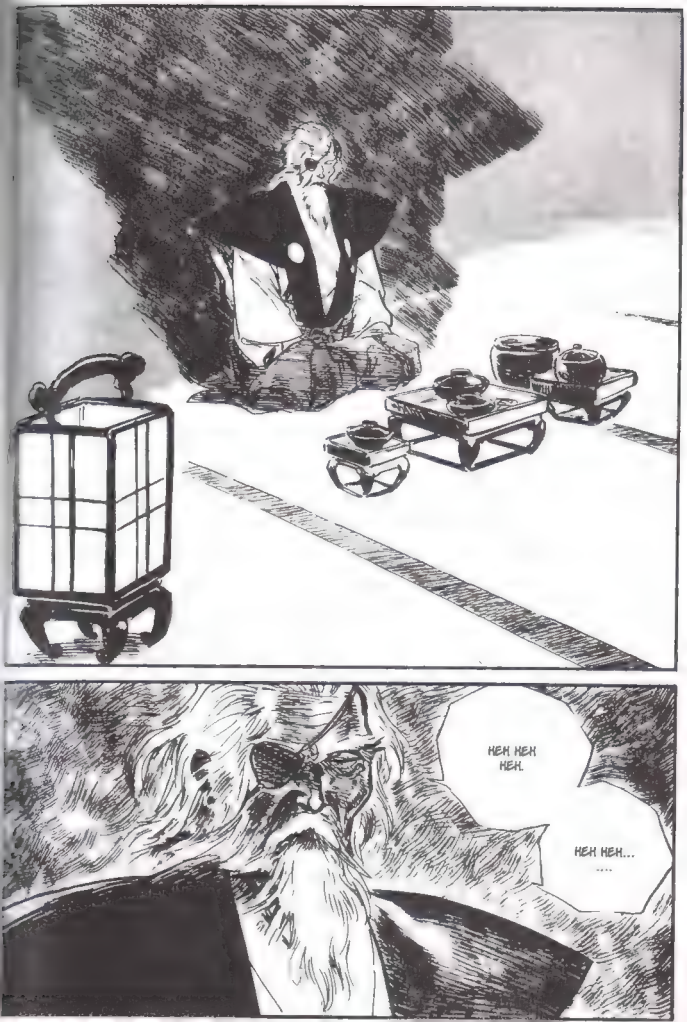
THE HOLLYHOCK CREST AND I ARE *INSEPARABLE.*

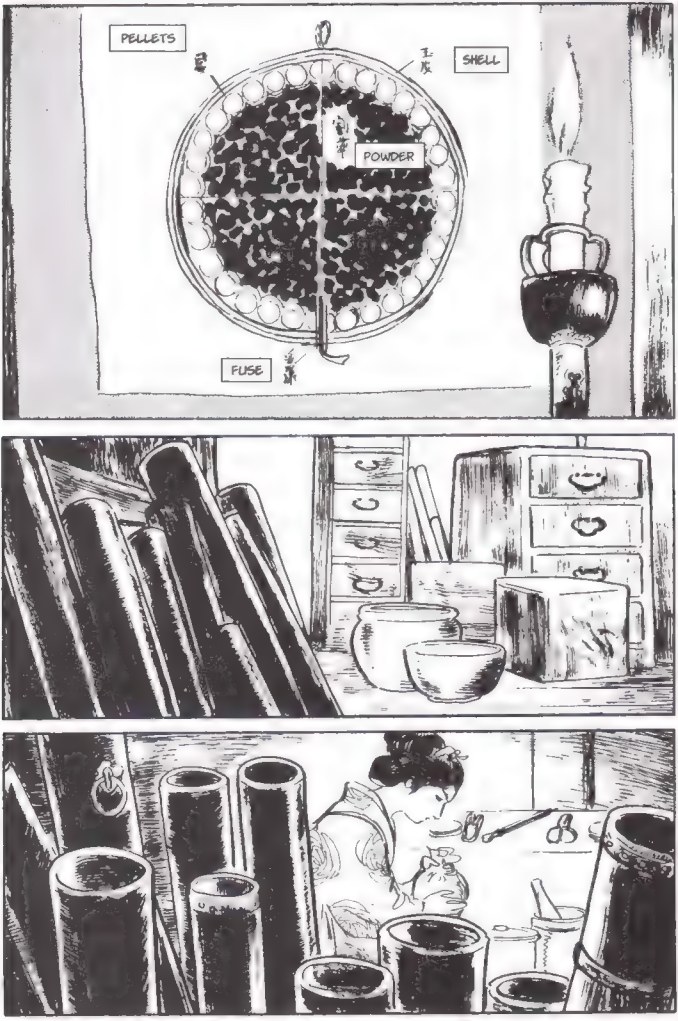
I'M THEIR EYES AND EARS, NOSE AND MOUTH, ARMS AND LEGS!
IF THE YAGYŪ PERISH, THE TOKUGAWA GO *BLIND*. NO *EARS* TO HEAR THE WARHORSE HOOVES, THE CLASH OF BLADES AND ROAR OF MUSKETS.
NO *NOSE* TO SMELL OUT THE SECRETS OF THE LAND. NO *MOUTH* TO DRINK THE BLOOD OF *DAIMYŌ*.
NO YAGYŪ—
—NO *TOKUGAWA!*
I'LL SUMMON THE *GRASS*, *KILL* ITTŌ, AND REBUILD THE *CLAN!*





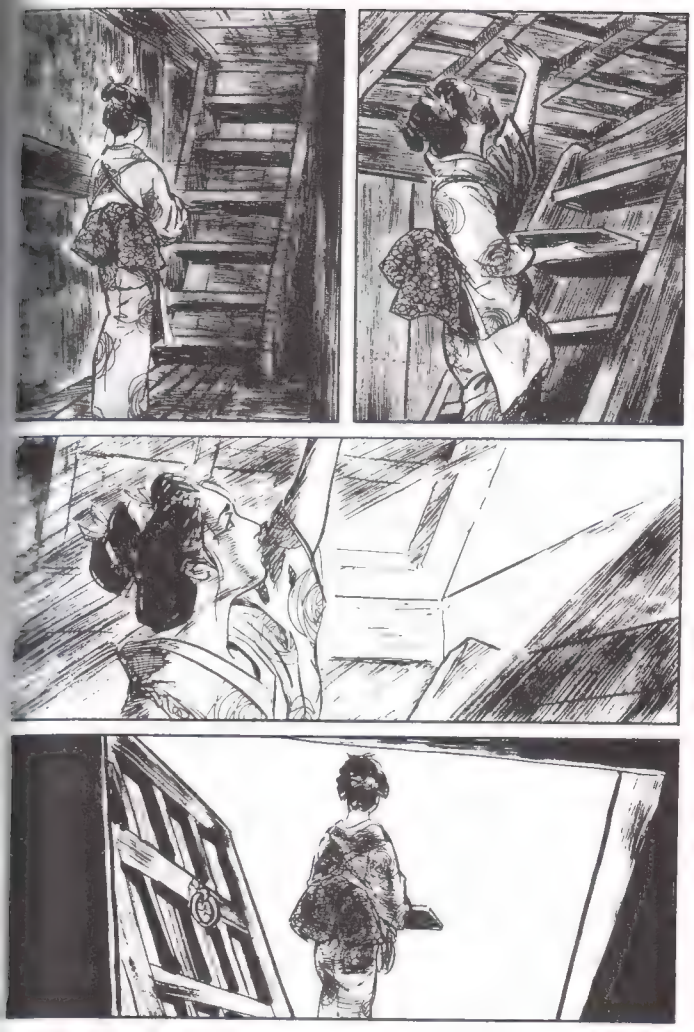

MY...! NOT THIRSTY?
KSHAK

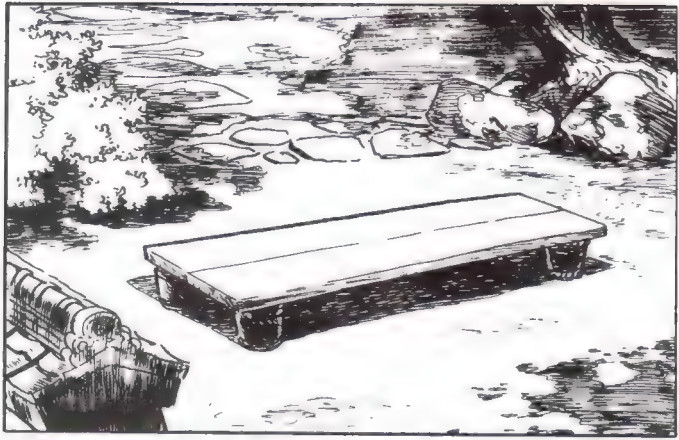

HEH HEH HEH.
HEH HEH...
....

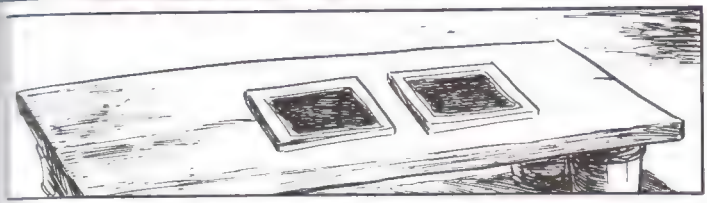

PELLETS
SHELL
POWDER
FUSE

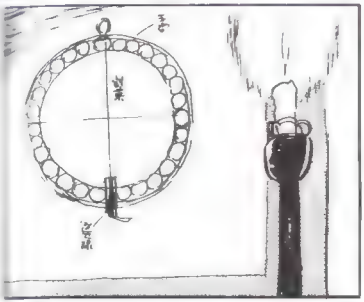
FOUR OF GUNPOWDER...
THREE OF WATER...
RICE POWDER TO MAKE IT STICK...
THEN MIX...

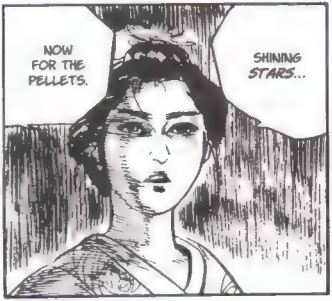
SPCH
SCRK
APPLY THE PASTE TO PAPER...
DRY IT, AND... DONE.

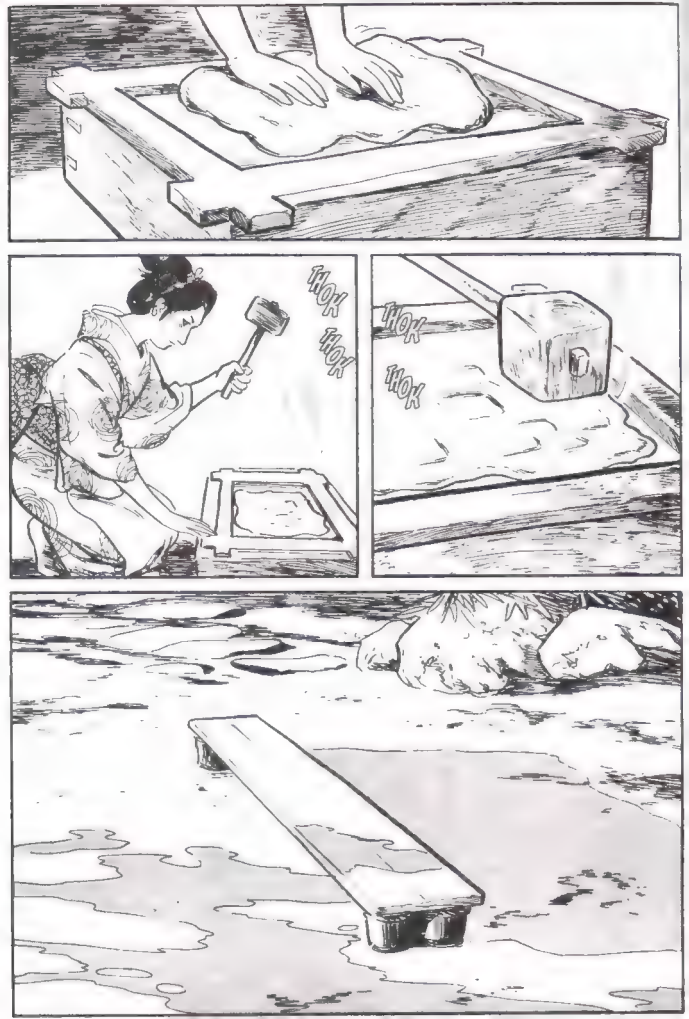


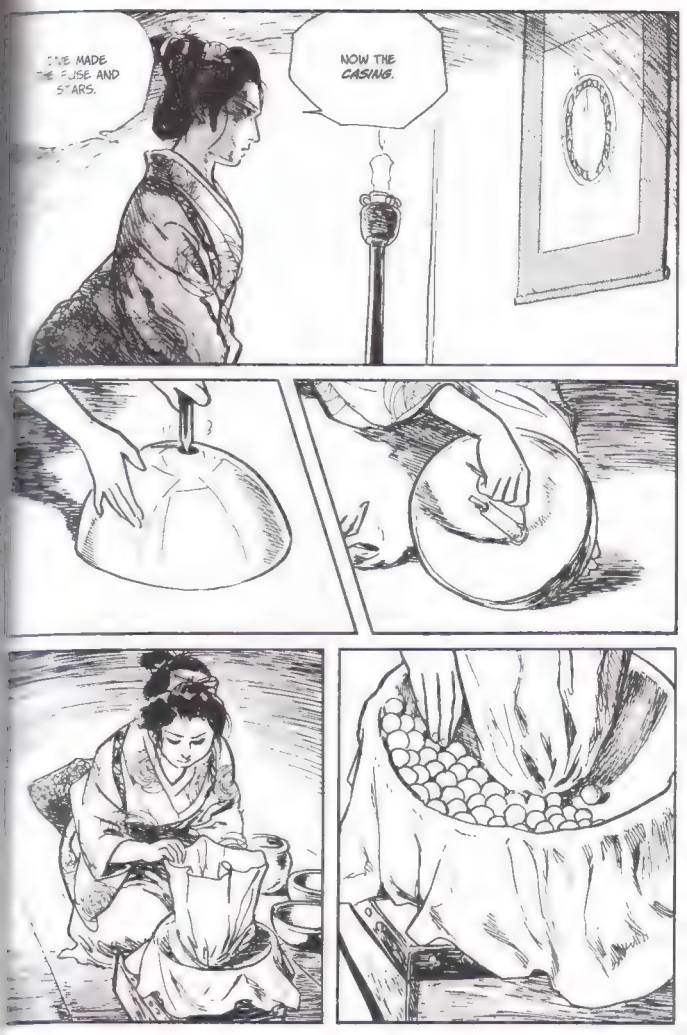






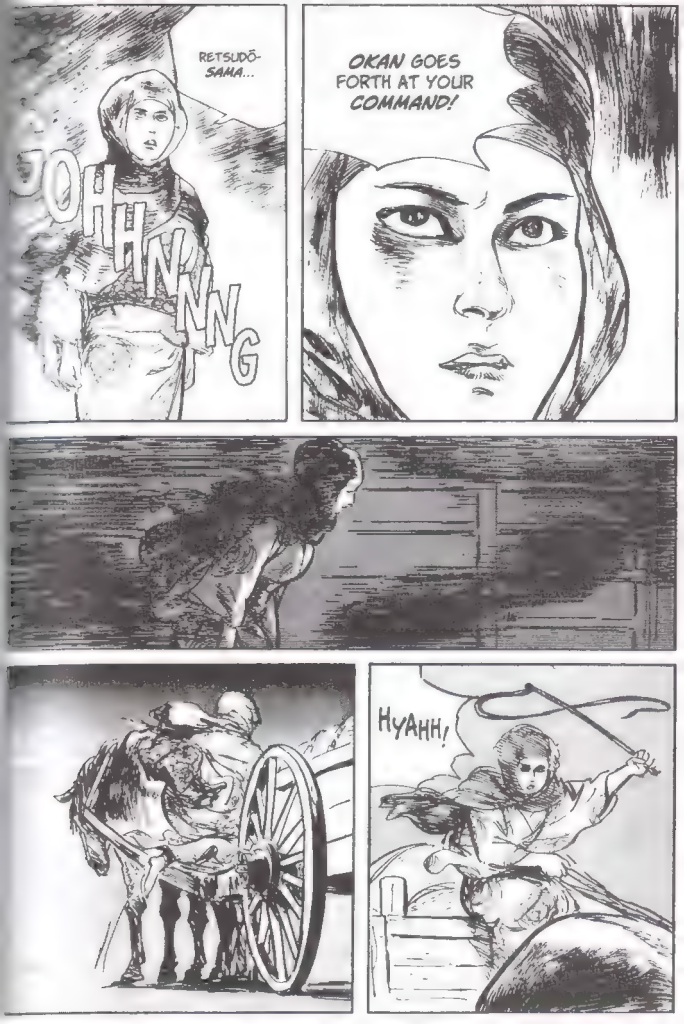

NOW FOR THE PELLETS.
SHINING STARS...


THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK


I'VE MADE THE FUSE AND STARS.
NOW THE CASING.

TOK TOK
TOK TOK TOK

ALMOST MIDNIGHT.
RETSUDŌ-*SAMA* HASN'T RETURNED.
GOHNNGGG

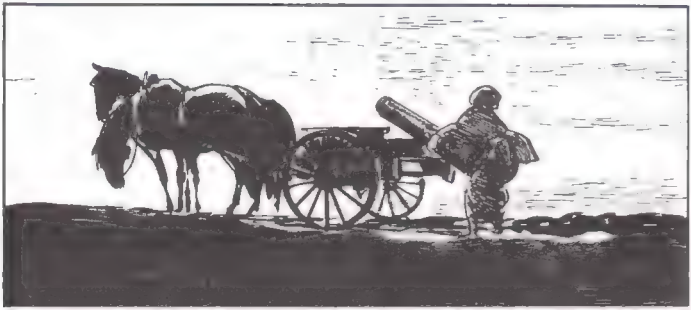

RETSUDŌ-SAMA...
OHHNNNG
OKAN GOES FORTH AT YOUR COMMAND!
HYAHH!

KRAKK
GARA
GARA
GARA
HOKK
GARA
GARA
WHSSHH

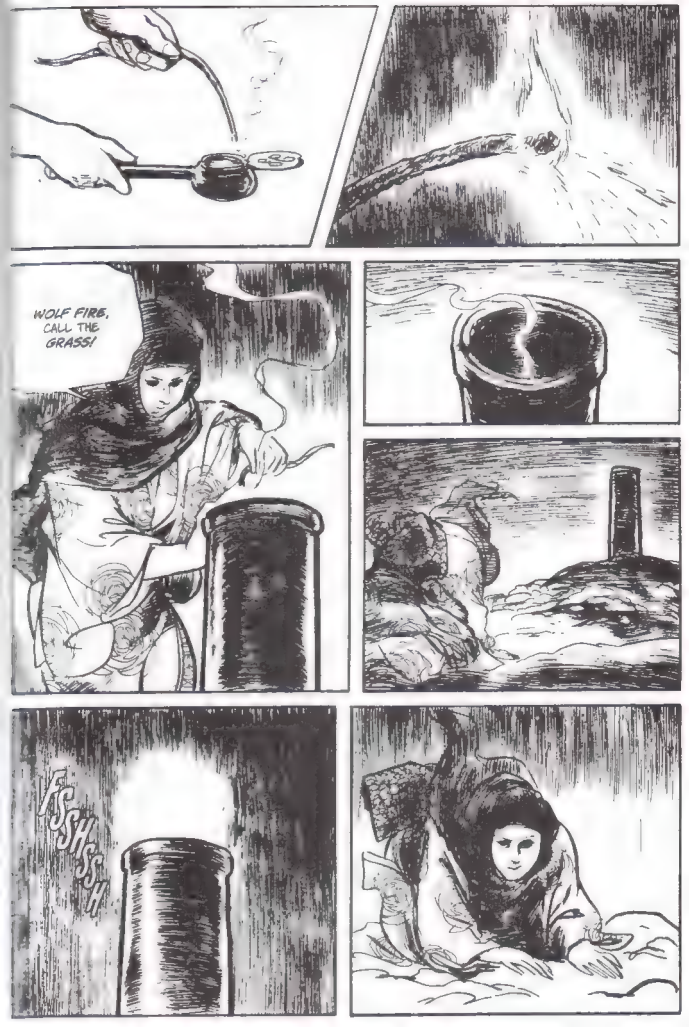
HYAHH!
YAHH!
GARA
GARA
GARA
THOKK!
THOKK!

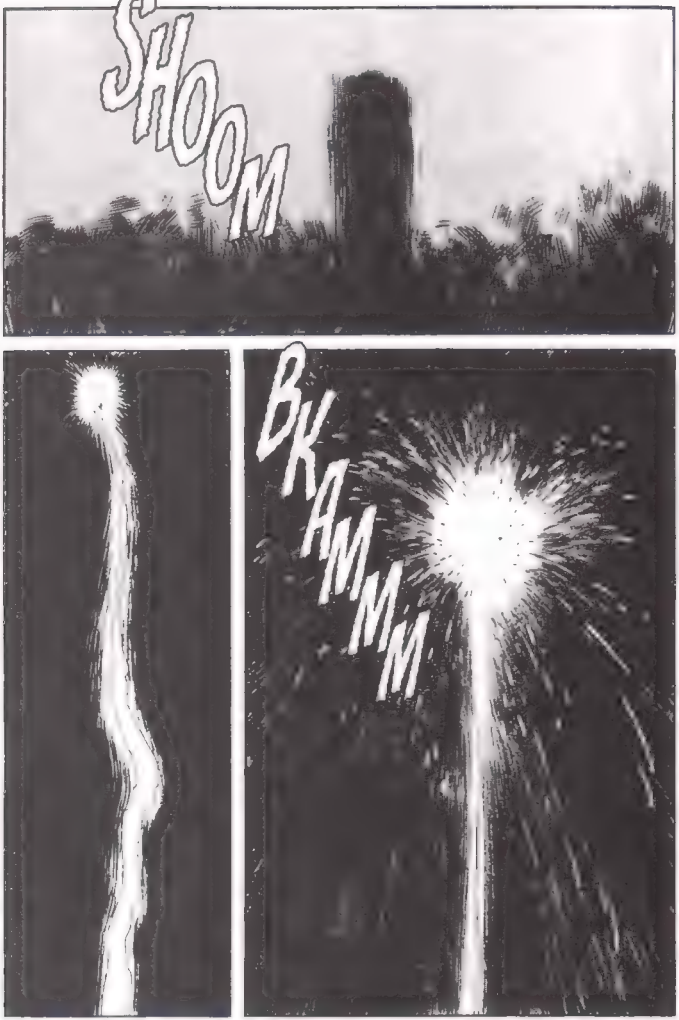
YAGYŪ-SAMA GO-YŌ!
GARA GARA GARA

*AGYÜ-SAMA GO-YÖ...?
IT'S OFFICIAL, SIR. BUT...STRANGE HOW YOU CAN SEE THAT CREST IN THE DARK..
SOME SPECIAL PAINT?
*RYÖGOKU BRIDGE



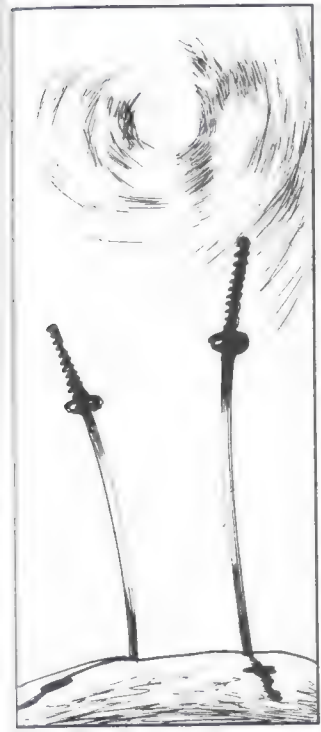
THUD
NAMU! GOD HATCHIMAN, AID ME!
OH! I FORGOT TO PUT THE CHARGE UNDER THE FIREWORK, FIRST...


WOLF FIRE, CALL THE GRASS!
FSSHSSH


SHOOM
BKAMMM

OH..!
BKAMM
SHOOM

BROOM
WHAM

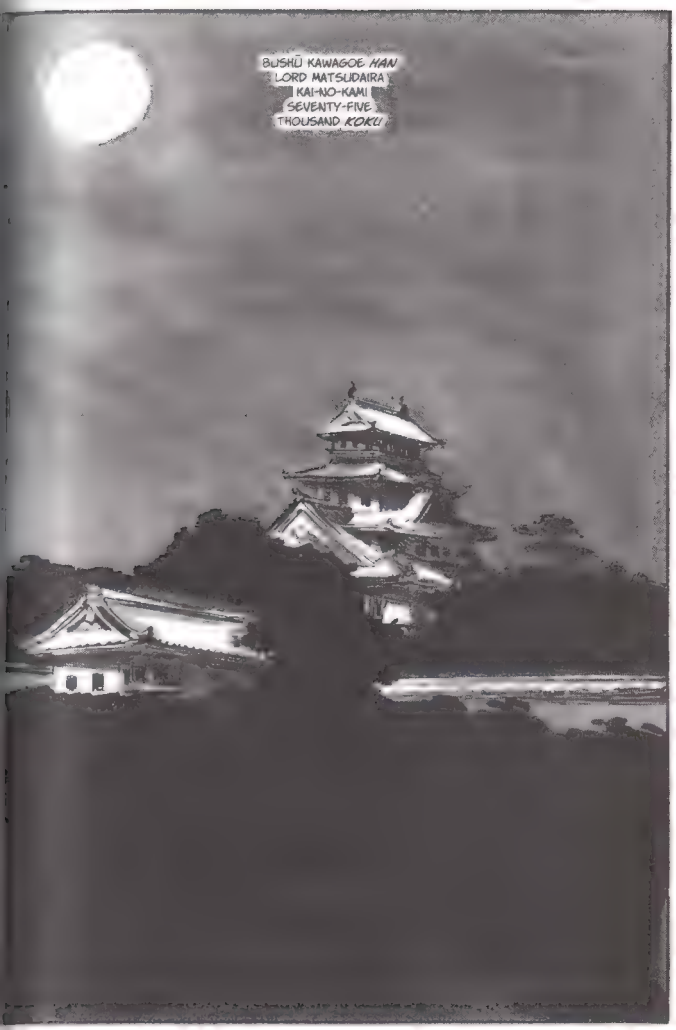


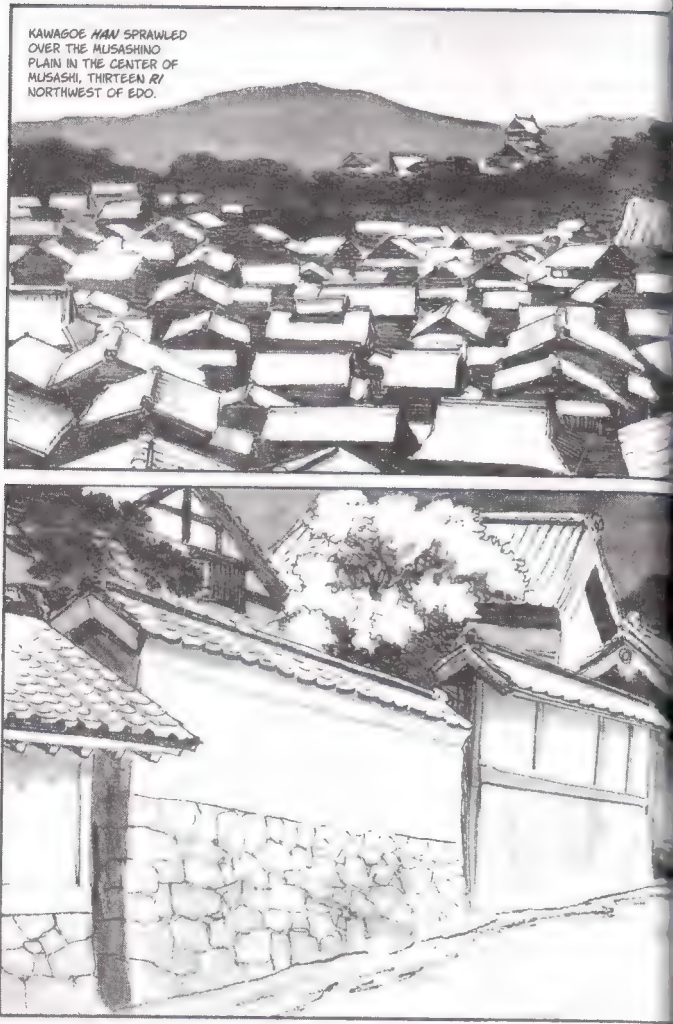
Ō...ŌGAMI...
ITTŌ-SAMA?!
A MESSAGE...
FROM R-RETSUDŌ-
SAMA— "PERHAPS,
SHISAN."
PERHAPS
SHISAN?!
NNGH
WHERE'S
RETSUDŌ?!
IN...THE
C-CASTLE...
THE
CASTLE...?

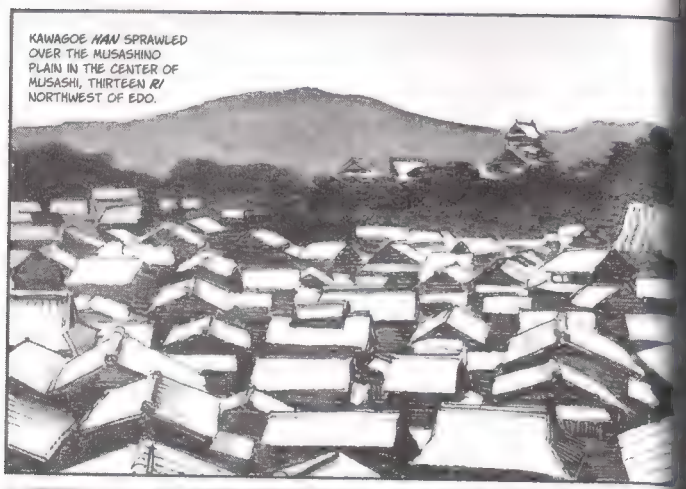
YOU LAUNCHED THAT WOLF FIRE?
FEW MEN COULD DO IT.
PERHAPS, IN DEATH...
THAT SIGNAL... ....
CALLING THE GRASS TO EDO?
SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO RETSUDO!

the hundred and twenty-third

Tales of the Grass: Oyamada Shume


BUSHŪ KAWAGOE *HAN*
LORD MATSUDAIRA
KAI-NO-KAMI
SEVENTY-FIVE
THOUSAND *KOKU*


KAWAGOE *HAN* SPRAWLED OVER THE MUSASHINO PLAIN IN THE CENTER OF MUSASHI, THIRTEEN *RI* NORTHWEST OF EDO.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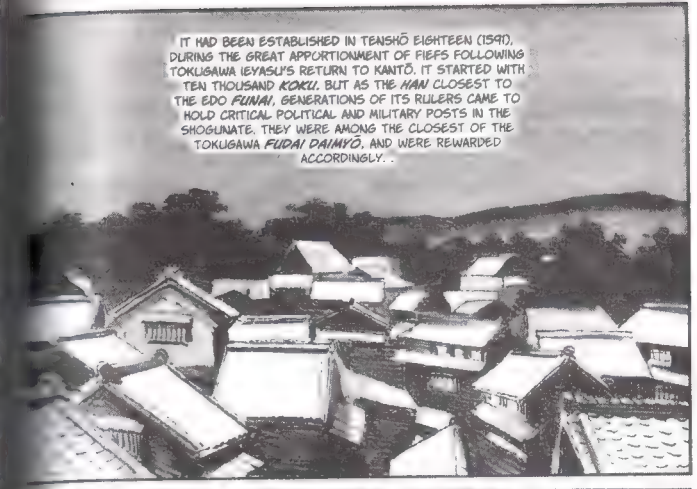
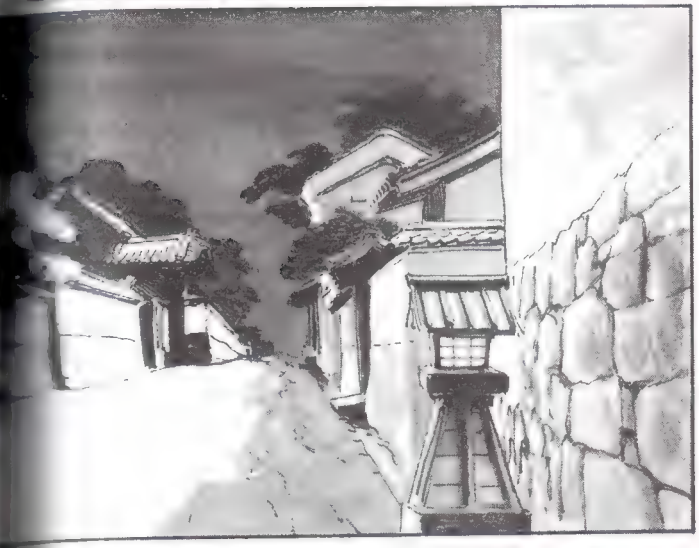
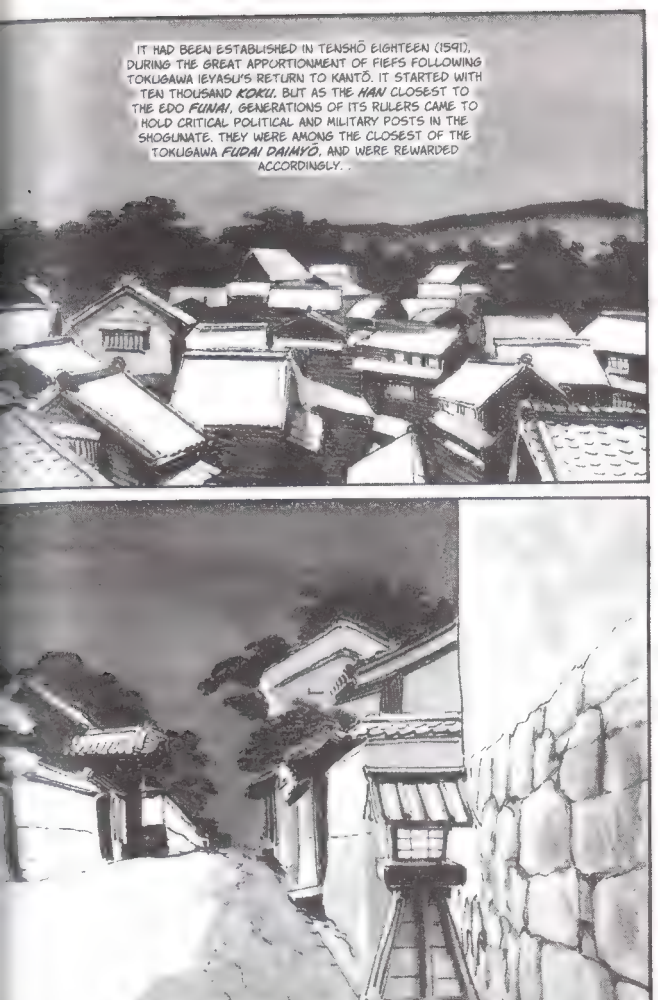
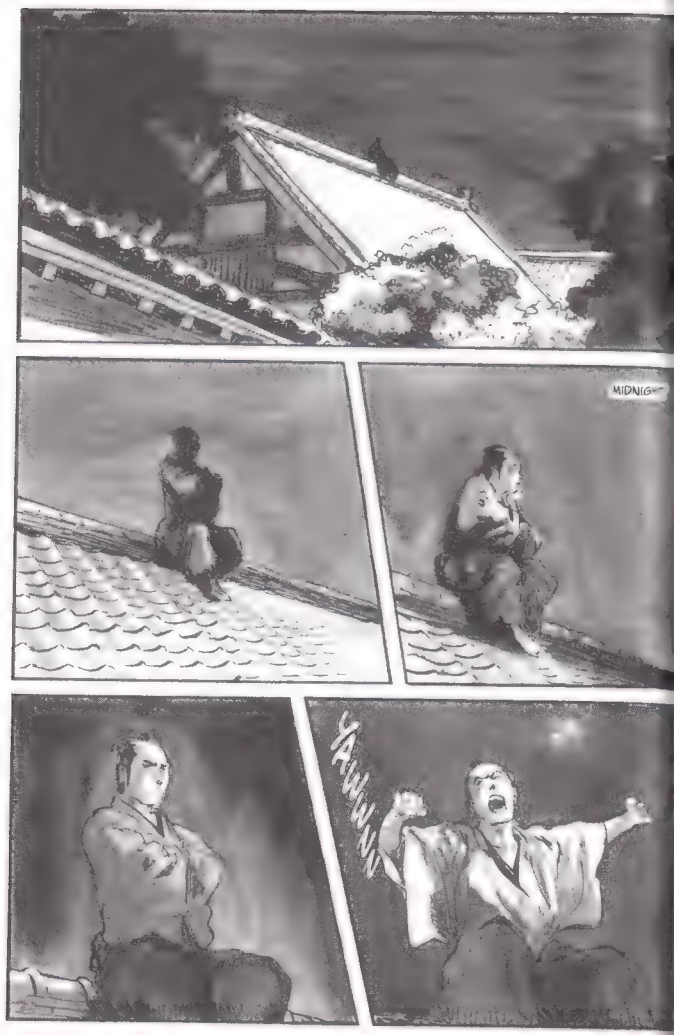
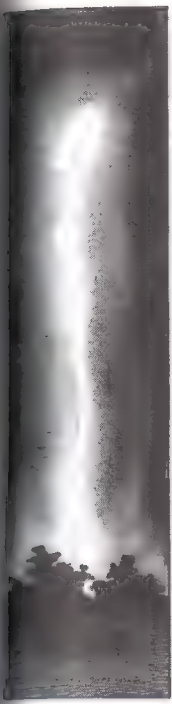
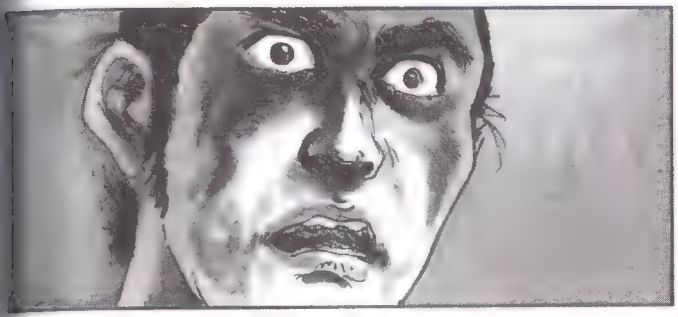

IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN TENSHŌ EIGHTEEN (1590), DURING THE GREAT APPORTIONMENT OF FIEFS FOLLOWING TOKUGAWA IEYASU'S RETURN TO KANTŌ. IT STARTED WITH TEN THOUSAND *KOKU*. BUT AS THE *HAN* CLOSEST TO THE EDO *FUNAI*, GENERATIONS OF ITS RULERS CAME TO HOLD CRITICAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY POSTS IN THE SHOGUNATE. THEY WERE AMONG THE CLOSEST OF THE TOKUGAWA *FUDAI DAIMYŌ*, AND WERE REWARDED ACCORDINGLY.

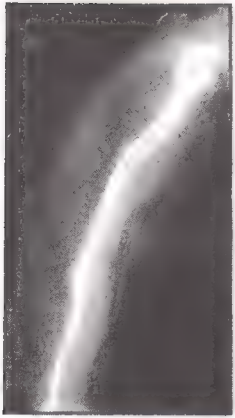



IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN TENSHŌ EIGHTEEN (1591), DURING THE GREAT APPORTIONMENT OF FIEFS FOLLOWING TOKUGAWA IEYASU'S RETURN TO KANTŌ. IT STARTED WITH TEN THOUSAND KOKU, BUT AS THE HAN CLOSEST TO THE EDO FUNAI, GENERATIONS OF ITS RULERS CAME TO HOLD CRITICAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY POSTS IN THE SHOGUNATE. THEY WERE AMONG THE CLOSEST OF THE TOKUGAWA FUDAI DAIMYŌ, AND WERE REWARDED ACCORDINGLY. .

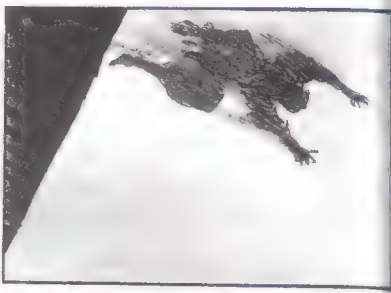

MIDNIGHT
YAWWWN

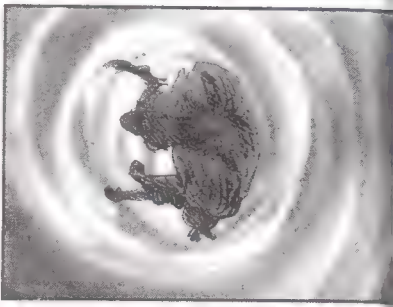




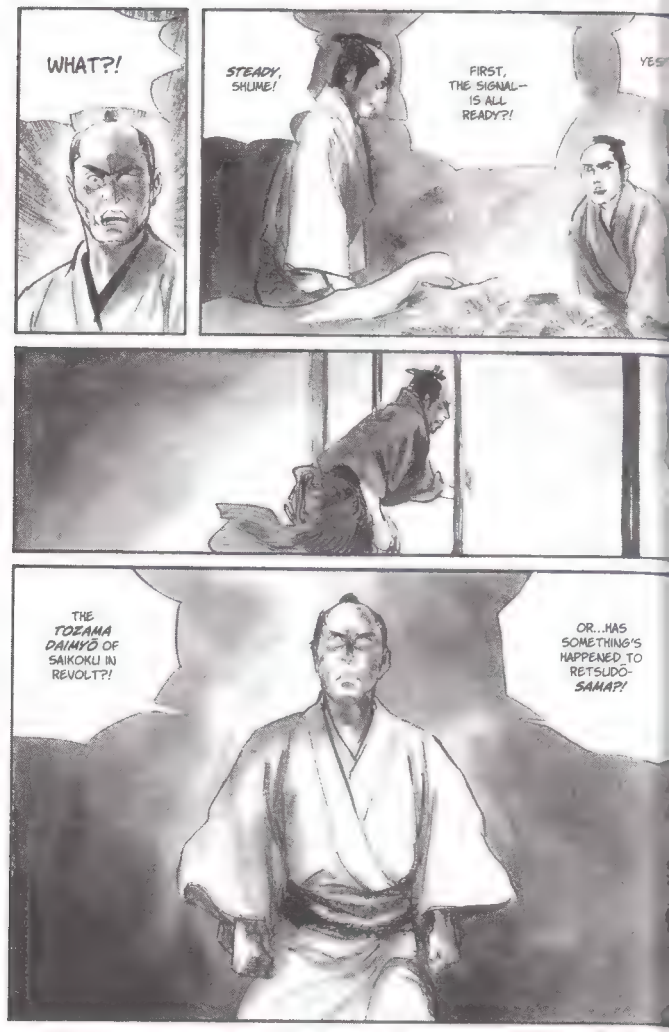


K...
KUSA WOLF
FIRE!

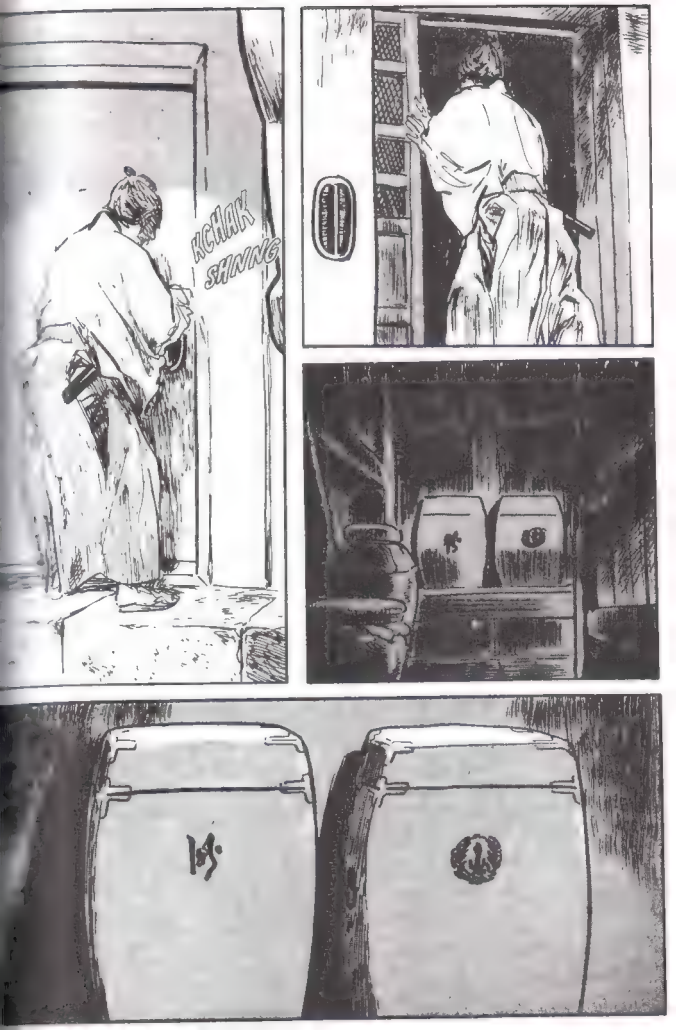


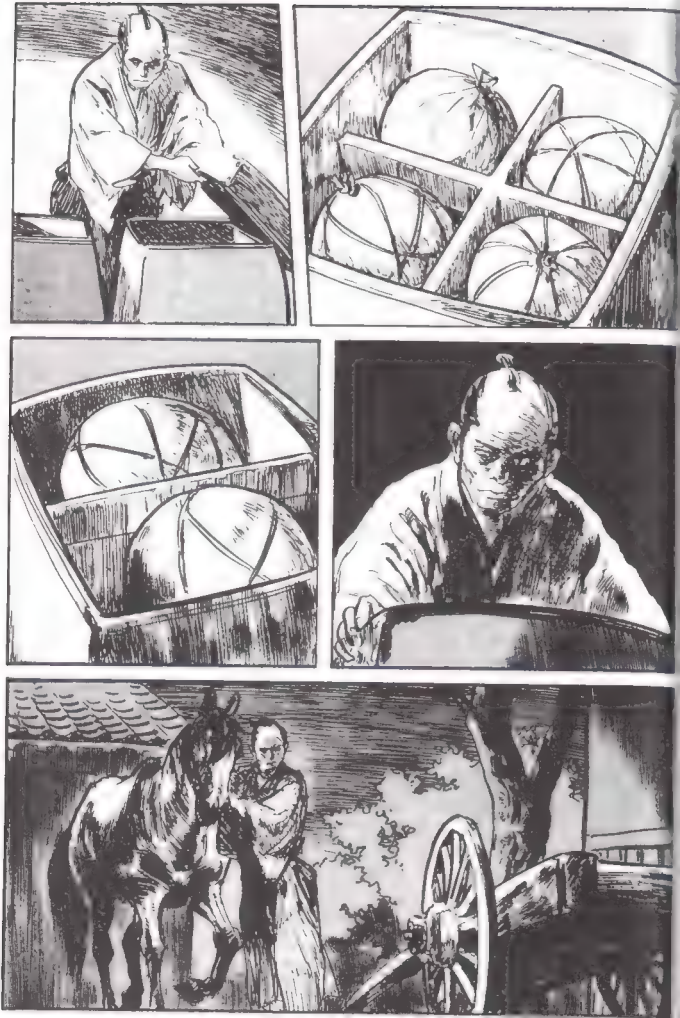


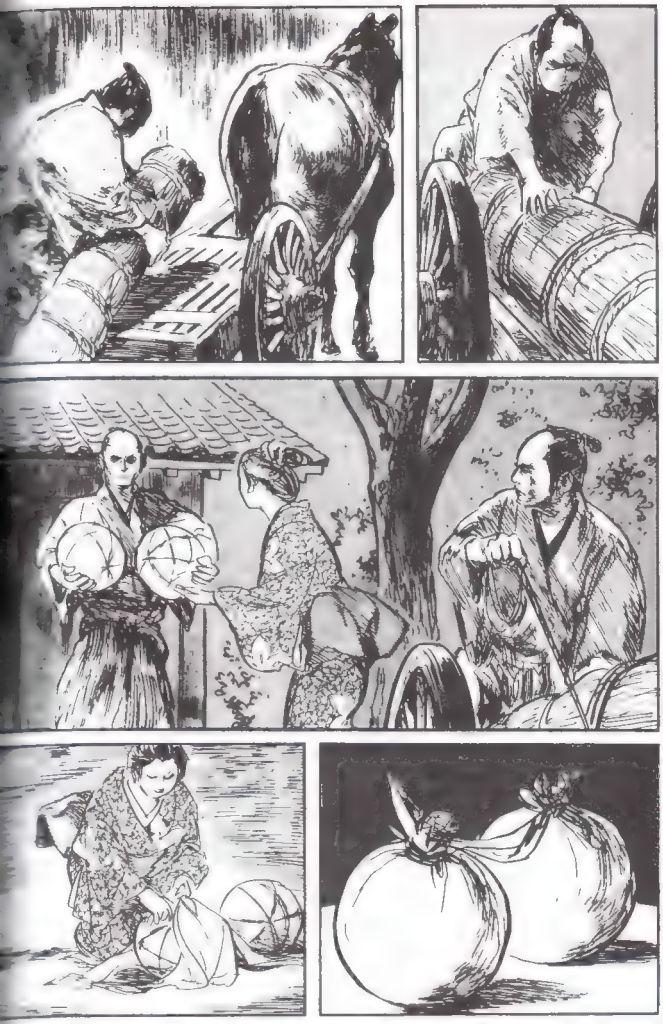
THD
THD
HD
FATHER!
WHAT IS IT?!
NOROSHI! WOLF FIRE!


WHAT?!
STEADY, SHUME!
FIRST, THE SIGNAL— IS ALL READY?!
YES!
THE TOZAMA DAIMYŌ OF SAIKOKU IN REVOLT?!
OR...HAS SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO RETSUDŌ-SAMA?!

THD
THD
...OTHER...
QUICKLY! GO!


KCHAK
SHING





SO...OUR FAMILY ENDS IN THREE GENERATIONS.

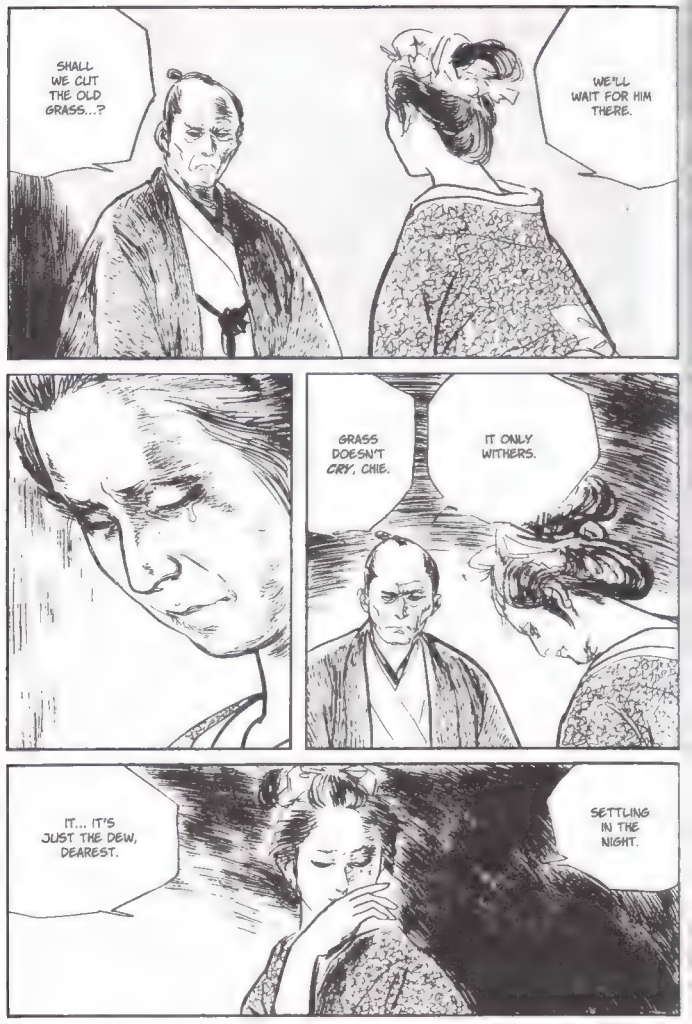
DO YOUR DUTY, SHIME.
AND HAVE NO REGRETS.

MOTHER!

GARA
GARA
THOKKA

HYAHH!
YAHH!

GARA GARA SHAKK
DRNN DRNN DRNN
DRN DRN DRN

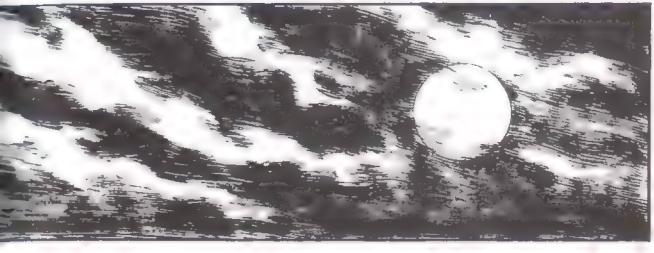

SHALL WE CUT THE OLD GRASS...?
WE'LL WAIT FOR HIM THERE.
GRASS DOESN'T CRY, CHIE.
IT ONLY WITHERS.
IT... IT'S JUST THE DEW, DEAREST.
SETTLING IN THE NIGHT.

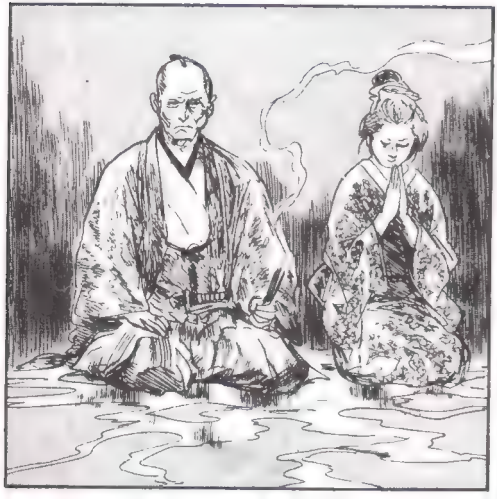
DRNN DRNN DRNN

OIL

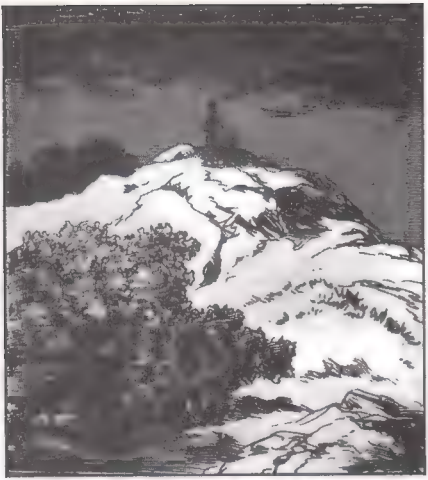
TONO!
AS YAGYŪ
SRASS, I
BETRAYED...
...MY
LORD AND
MY HAN!

ACCEPT THIS
APOLOGY!

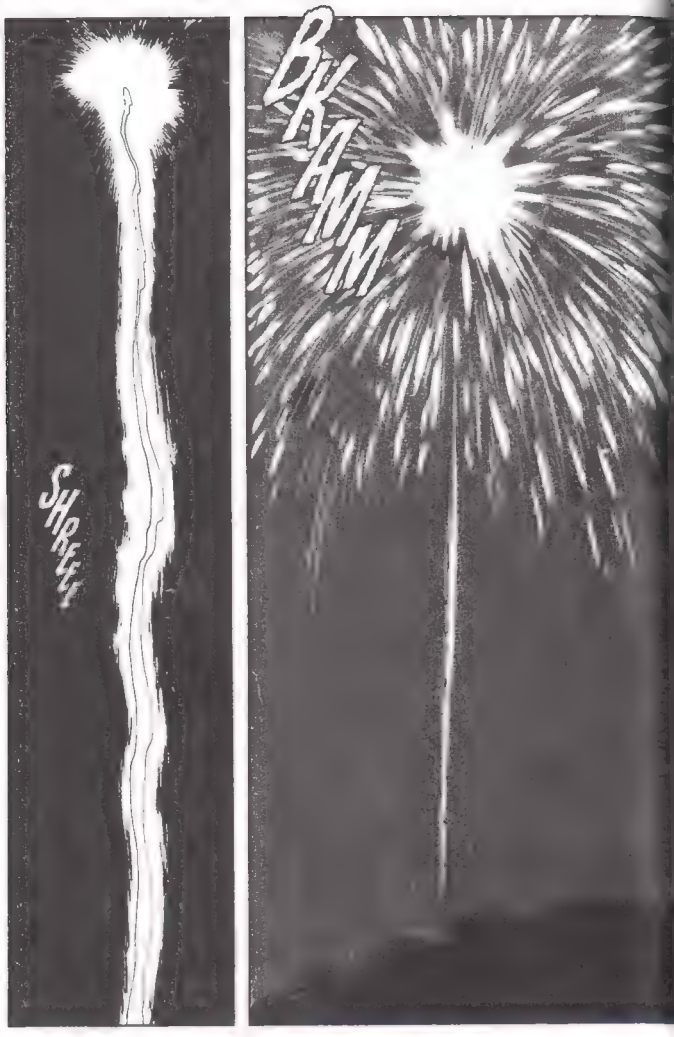




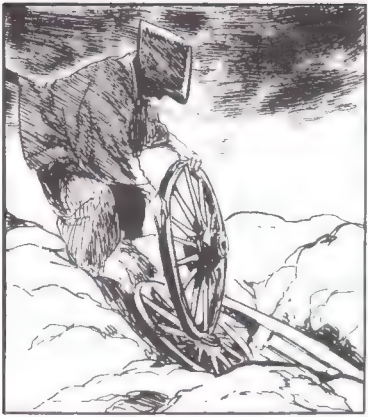
WHOOSH



SHOOM

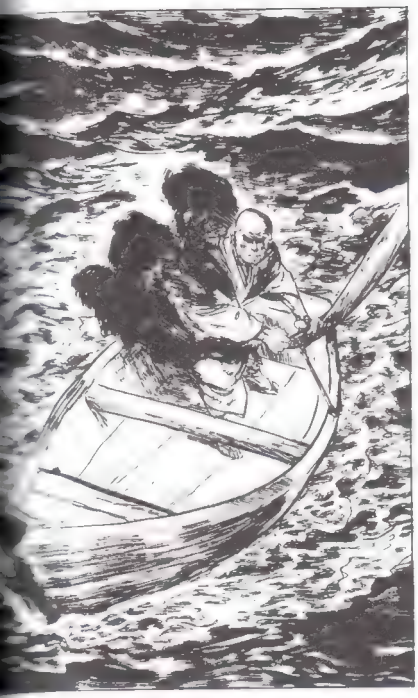

SHREEE
BKAMM

BKOOM



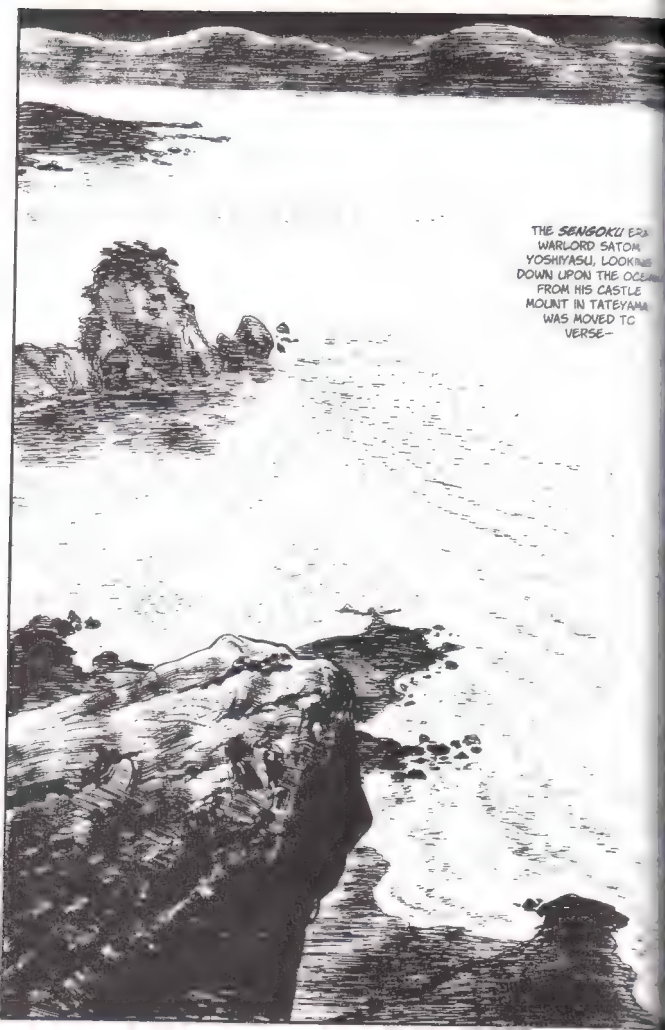
YAHH!
HYAHH!

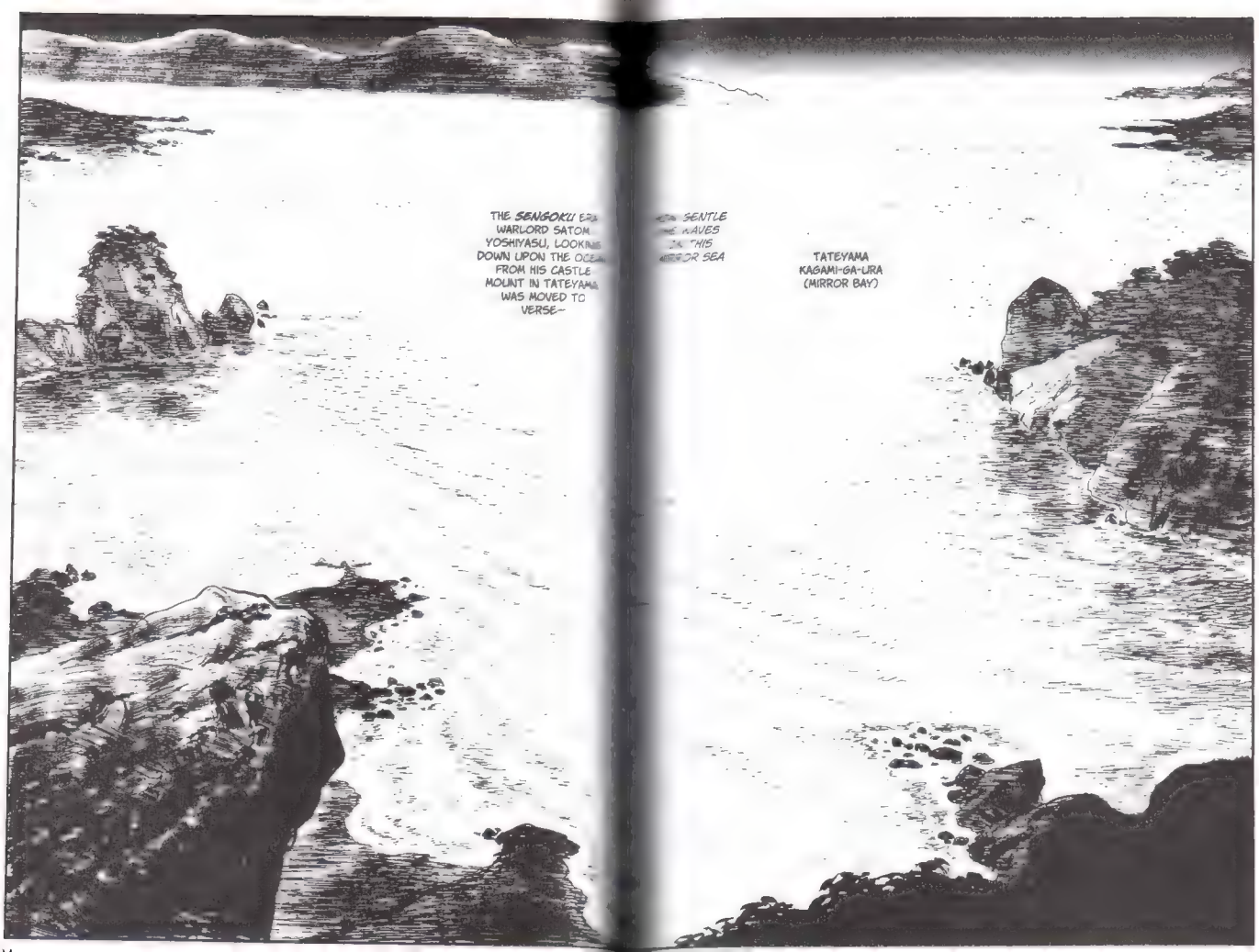
THE REPORT OF THE MATSUKE OF KAWAGOE HAN..
"A SUSPICIOUS FIRE IN FUKASAWA TODAY DESTROYED THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF HAN CAVALRY OFFICER OYAMADA SHUME. TWO BODIES RECOVERED FROM THE RUINS ARE BELIEVED TO BE THOSE OF OYAMADA'S RETIRED FATHER AND MOTHER. SHUME'S WHEREABOUTS REMAIN UNKNOWN, PRESUMED DEAD."

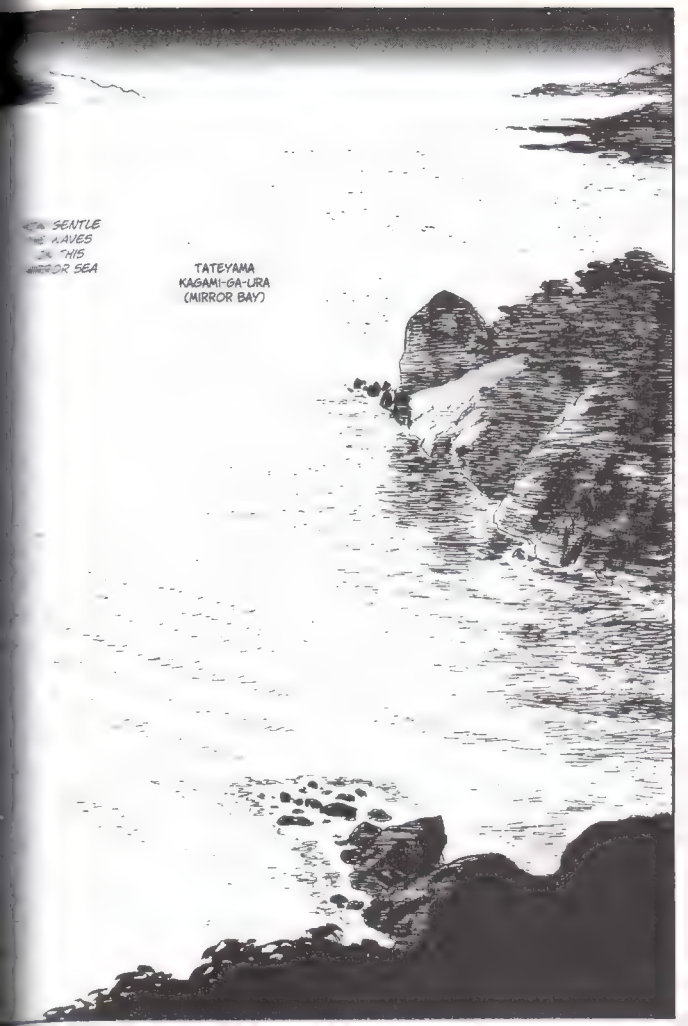


the hundred and twenty-fourth

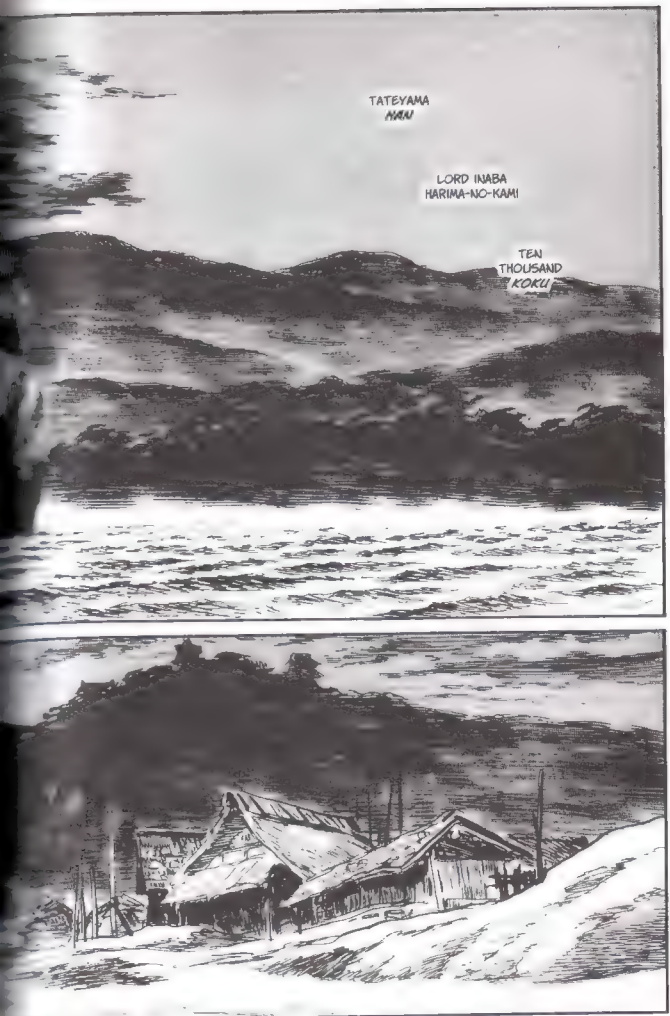
Tales of the Grass: Nakodera Bushō

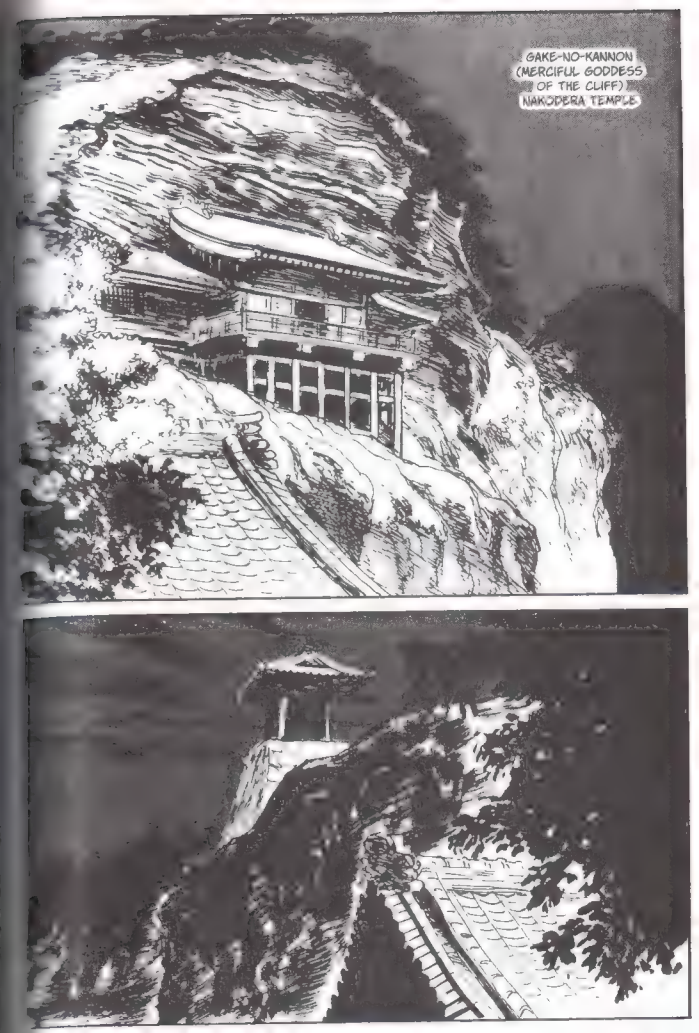

THE SENGOKU ERA WARLORD SATOMI YOSHIYASU, LOOKING DOWN UPON THE OCEAN FROM HIS CASTLE MOUNT IN TATEYAMA WAS MOVED TO VERSE—

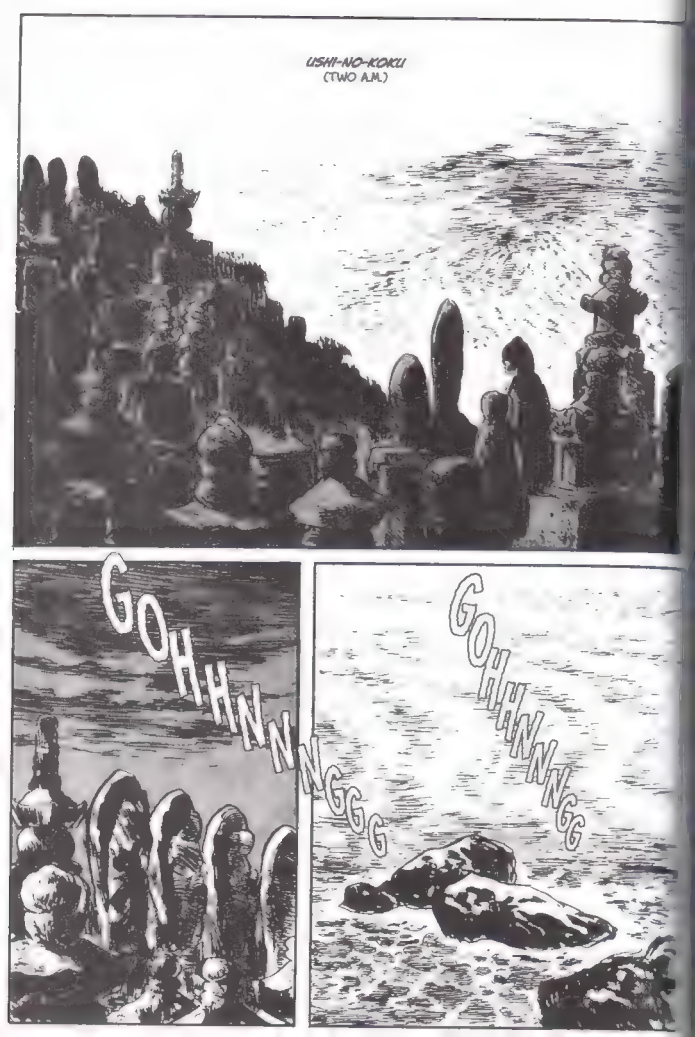

THE SENGOKU ERA WARLORD SATOMI YOSHIYASU, LOOKING DOWN UPON THE OCEAN FROM HIS CASTLE MOUNT IN TATEYAMA, WAS MOVED TO VERSE—
GENTLE WAVES IN THIS MIRROR SEA
TATEYAMA
KAGAMI-GA-URA
(MIRROR BAY)

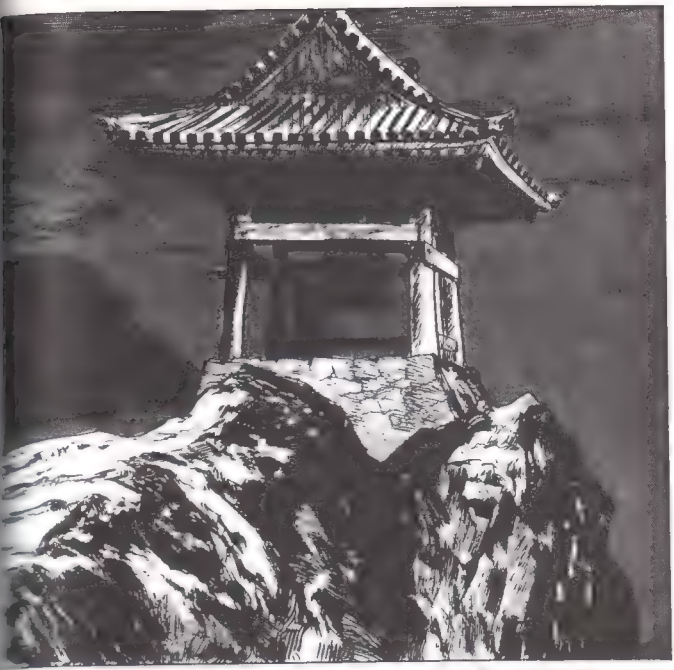

SENTLE
WAVES
THIS
IRROR SEA
TATEYAMA
KAGAMI-GA-URA
(MIRROR BAY)

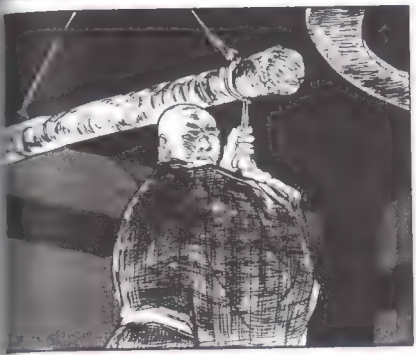
TATEYAMA
HAN
LORD INABA
HARIMA-NO-KAMI
TEN
THOUSAND
KOKU

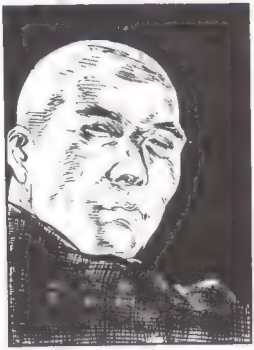

TATEYAMA
HAN
LORD INABA
HARIMA-NO-KAMI
TEN
THOUSAND
KOKU

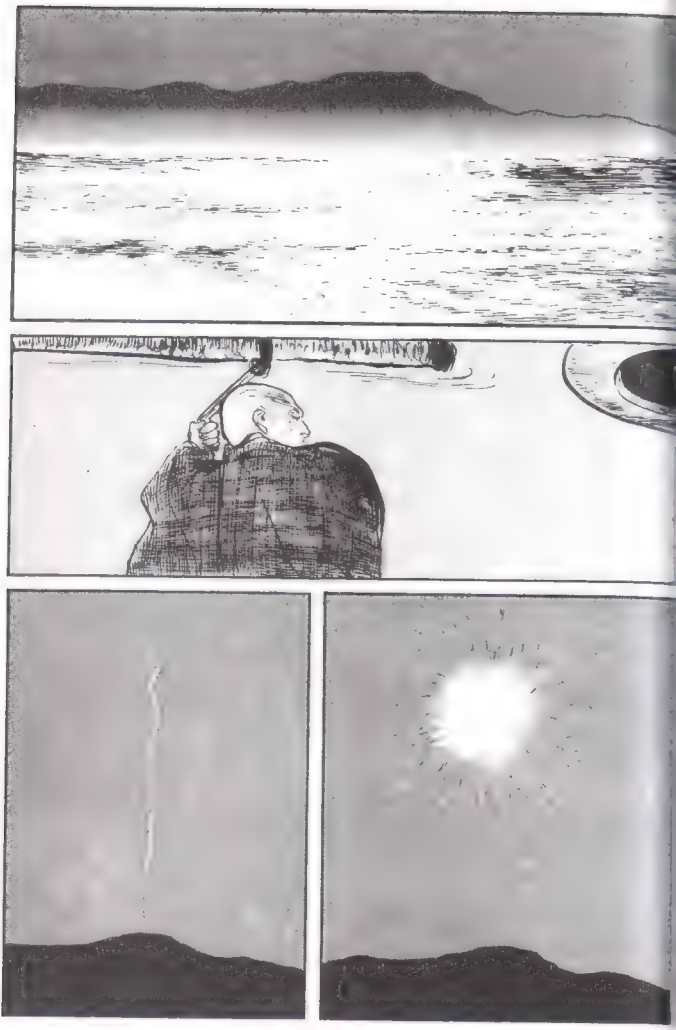

GAKE-NO-KANNON
(MERCIFUL GODDESS
OF THE CLIFF)
NAKODERA TEMPLE


USHI-NO-KOKU
(TWO A.M.)
GOHHNNNGGG
GOHHNNNGG



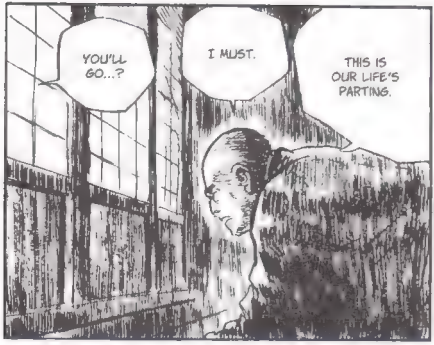




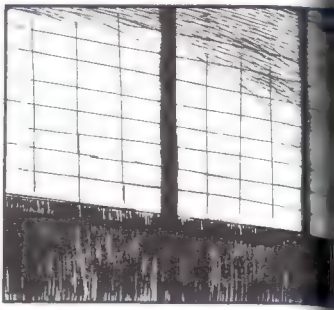


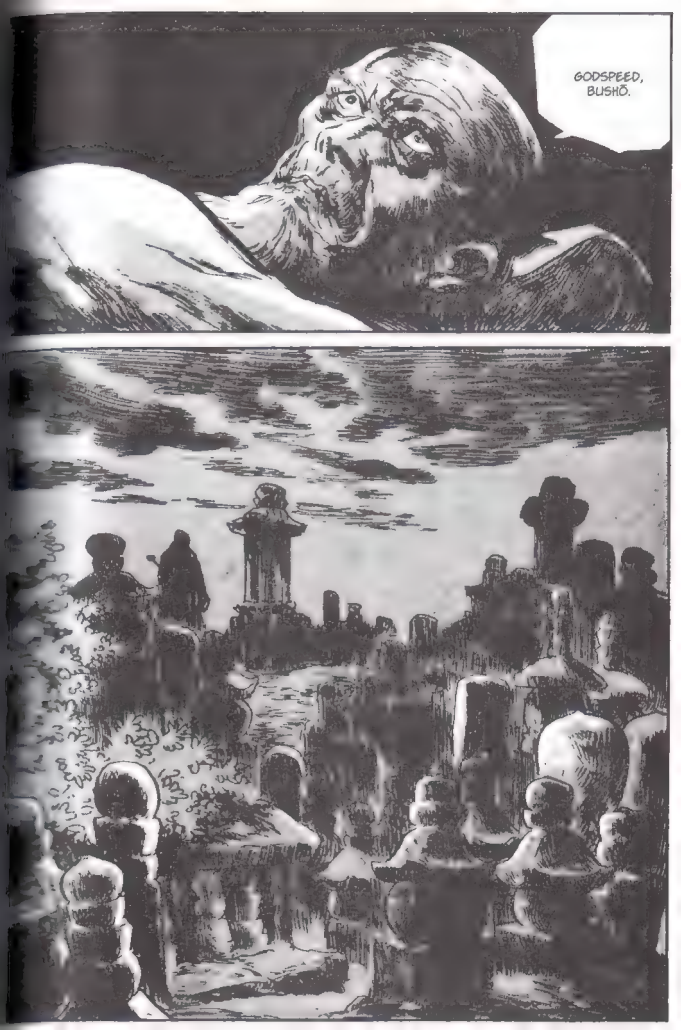
GOHNNNNGGG

THE THIRD BELL... A BREATH'S BEAT SLOW.
THEY LAUNCHED *WOLF FIRE*, FATHER!
FROM ODAWARA, AT *USHI-NO-KOKU*.


YOU'LL GO...?
I MUST.
THIS IS OUR LIFE'S PARTING.

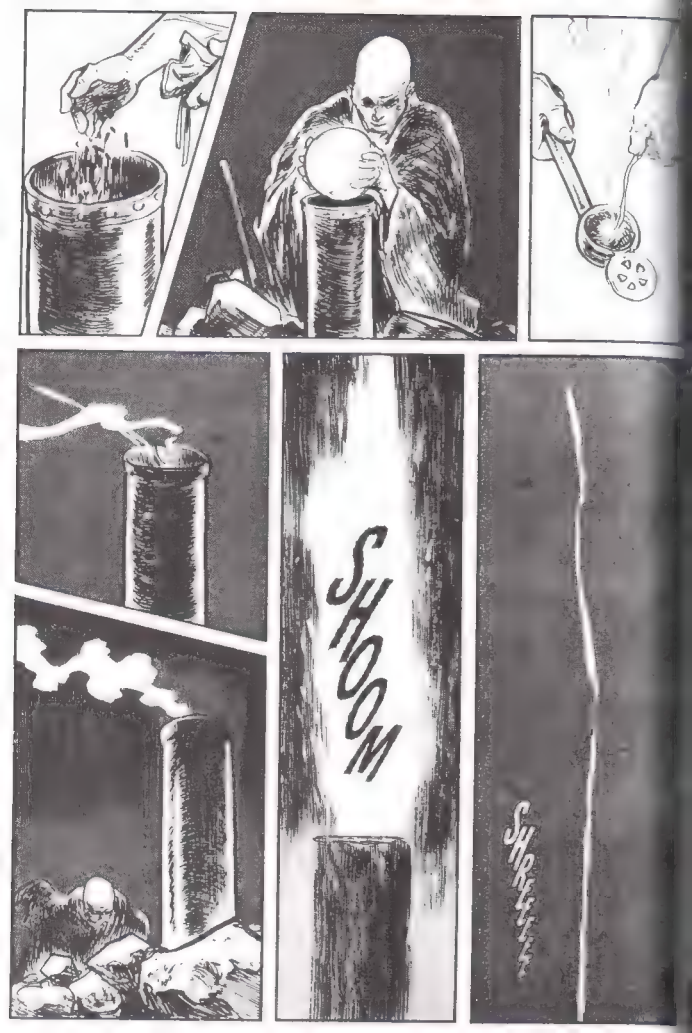
IN THE NEXT...




GODSPEED, BUSHŌ.

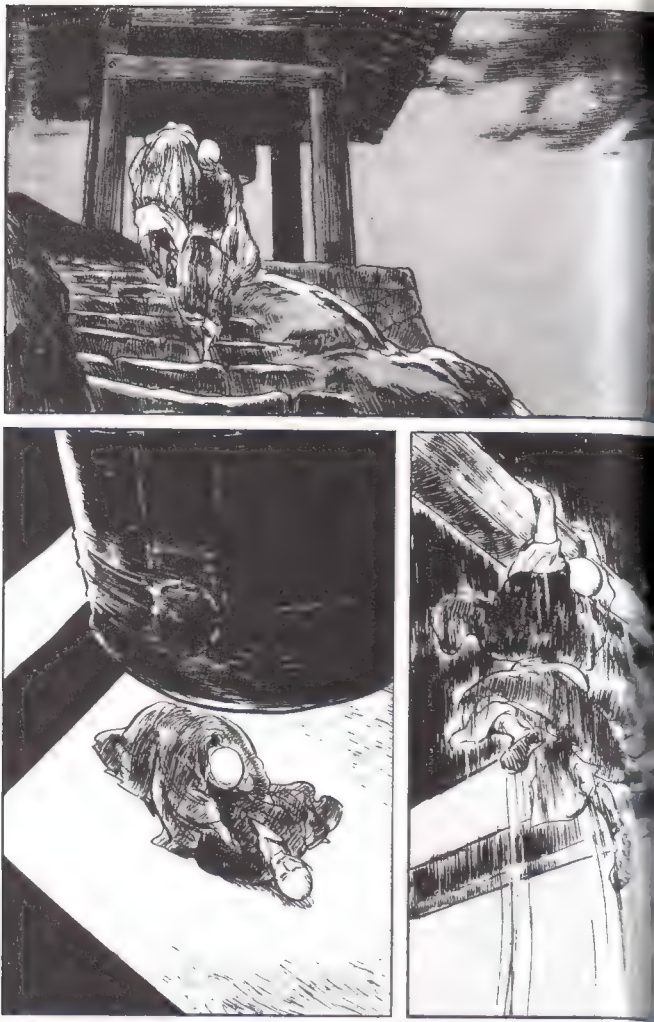
里見家累代之墓
*SATOMI CLAN
NA
WRAAK

KANNG
KRAKK


SHOOM
SHREEEE

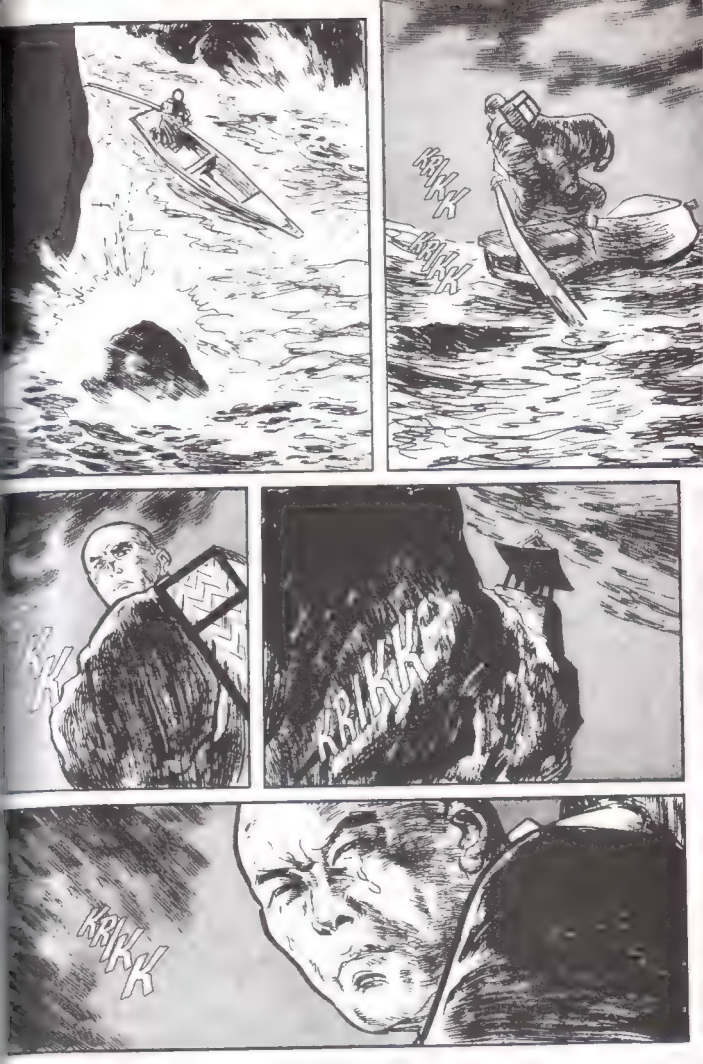
BKAMM
SHOOM
BKAMM
KNNK
SHRAK

NAMU...

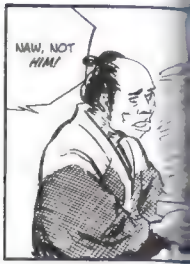


RNNG...
HNG...!
GRK'K
SHHH

SKWNSH
KRANNG


KRKK
KRKK
KRKK
KBLKK
KRKK

WHY DIDN'T THE REV'REND COME, EH?
MEBBE HE'S SICK?

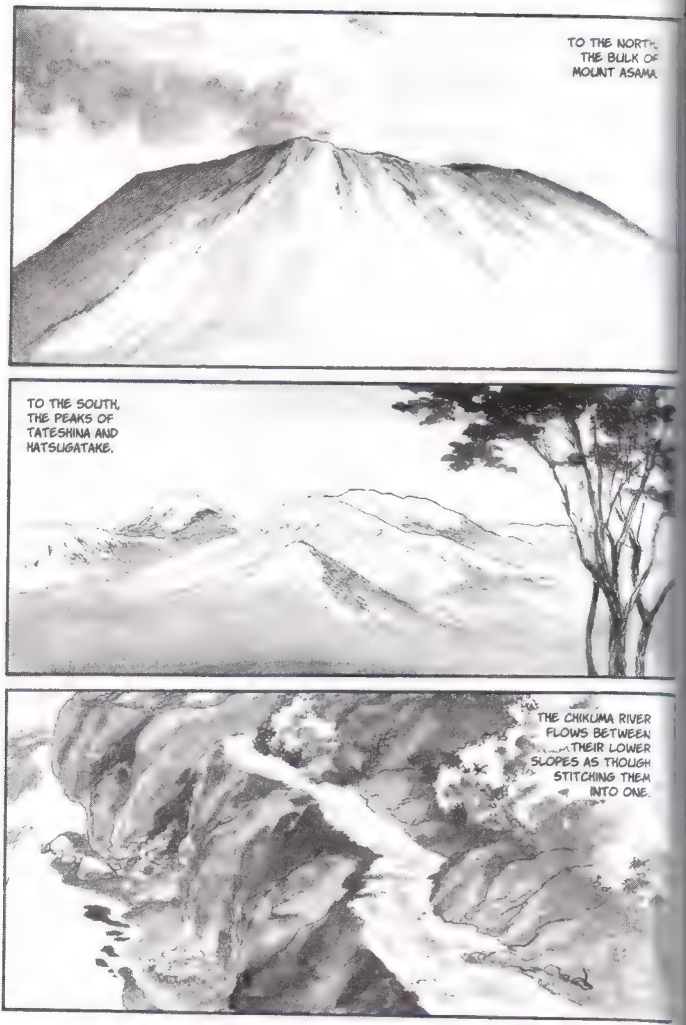

NAW, NOT HIM!

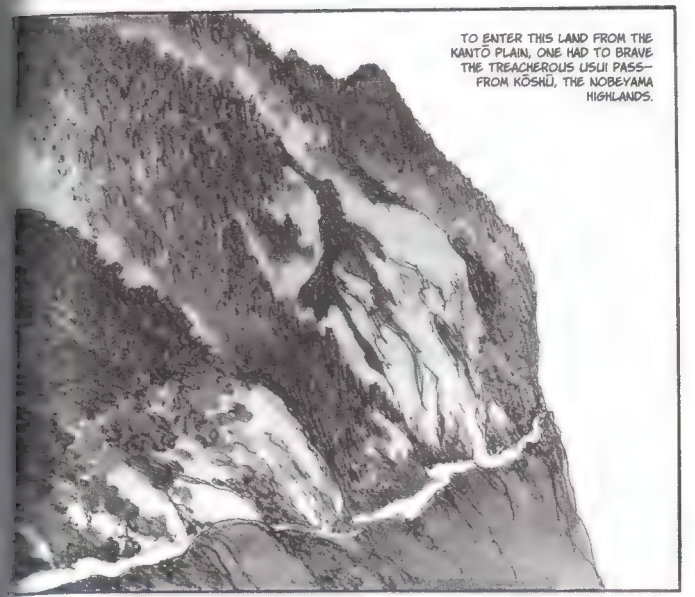
AAHH?!
THE...THE REVEREND!

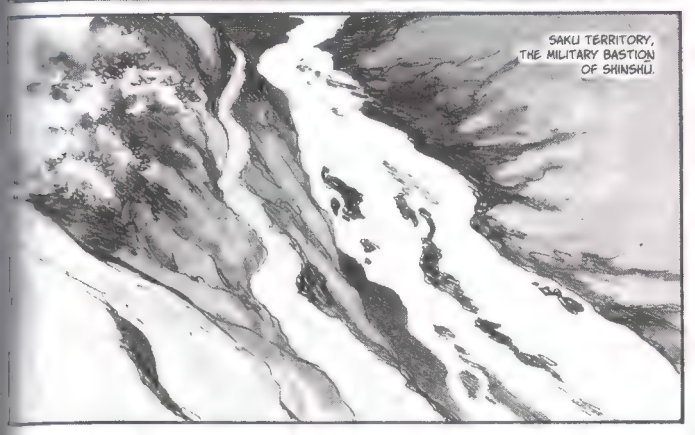
"BUSHŌ OF NAKODERA, A PRIEST OF RARE PIETY, PERISHED MOST STRANGELY YESTEREVE: CRUSHED BEYOND RECOGNITION BY HIS OWN TEMPLE BELL."
TATEYAMA HAN JISHA BUGYŌ REPORT
"ADDENDA: AT OR NEAR THE SAME TIME AS THE ACCIDEN THE TOMB OF THE SATO CLAN CRUMBLED TO PIECE A GREAT MYSTE
"THE PEASANTS CLAIM IT WAS A BATTLE BETWEEN BUSHŌ WAJŌ AND THE VENGEFUL GHOSTS OF THE SATOMI CLAN..."

the hundred and twenty-fifth

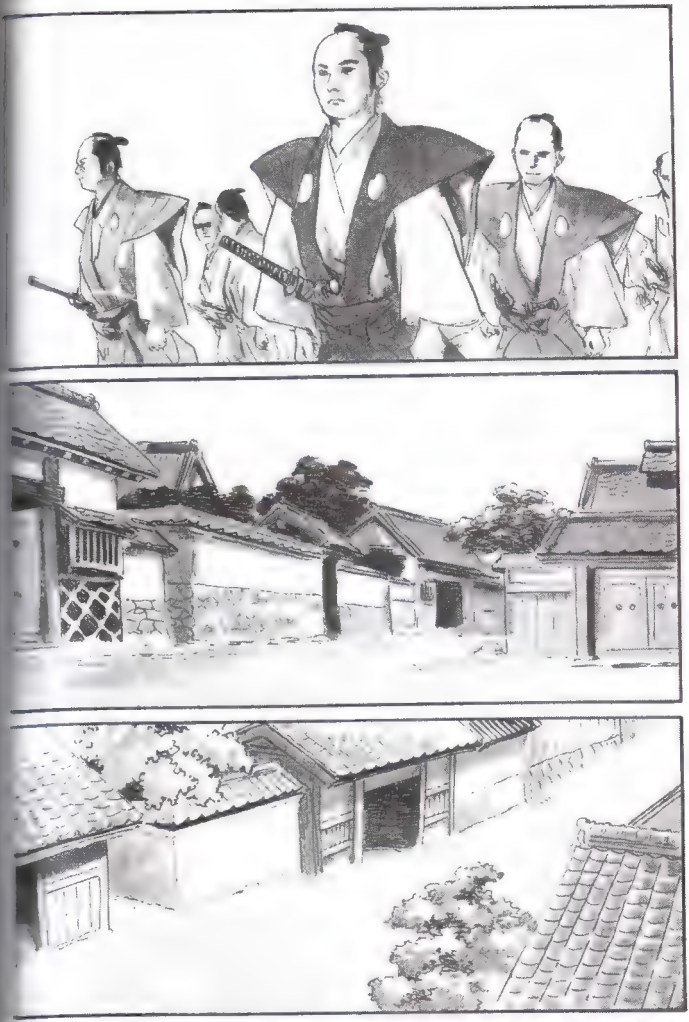
Tales of the Grass: Day Like Any Other


TO THE NORTH, THE BULK OF MOUNT ASAMA.
TO THE SOUTH, THE PEAKS OF TATESHINA AND HATSUGATAKE.
THE CHIKUMA RIVER FLOWS BETWEEN THEIR LOWER SLOPES AS THOUGH STITCHING THEM INTO ONE.


TO ENTER THIS LAND FROM THE KANTŌ PLAIN, ONE HAD TO BRAVE THE TREACHEROUS USUI PASS— FROM KŌSHŪ, THE NOBEYAMA HIGHLANDS.


SAKU TERRITORY, THE MILITARY BASTION OF SHINSHU.

KOMOROSHI HAN
LORD MAKINO NAIZEN
FIFTEEN THOUSAND
KOKU



御影
*MIKAGE
I'M HOME.
WELCOME BACK.

"HANK
OL FOR YOUR
ABORS.
MM.
JIRŌ
HE'S
STILL OUT
FISHING.
MOTHER...!

OH! FATHER!
WELCOME BACK!

YES, FATHER!
SEE, SIR...?
HOH! ALL OF THEM A GOOD SIZE!
I FOUND A SECRET FISHING HOLE, FATHER!
IT'S ABOVE TENJIN SHRINE... THEY REALLY BITE THERE!
I SEE!

SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD ONE.
MAYBE YOU'LL SHOW ME...?
OF COURSE!
SO... SHALL I COOK THEM FOR DINNER?

MORE FOR FATHER!
COMING!
ME, TOO!

IS HE ASLEEP?
YES, FINALLY
DARLING... ARE THE PADDIES GOING WELL?
SO-SO

NO, BUILDING PADDIES IS EASY. IT'S THE *REST*.
YOU CAN'T GROW RICE WITHOUT WATER...
...SO WE NEED *IRRIGATION*, TOO.
DIVERT WATER, BUILD DAMS, THEN CANALS TO FILL THE PADDIES.

THAT'S BEEN INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT.
WE'RE TRYING TO FUNNEL WATER IN FROM AN UPPER AND LOWER DAM.
BUT THE SLOPES OF ASAMA ARE VOLCANIC PUMICE. THE WATER SEEPS AWAY BEFORE IT REACHES THE PADDIES.
THE PUMICE SUCKS IT RIGHT UP, LIKE THIS.

YOU SEE...?

SO WE HAVE TO BUILD AN AQUEDUCT. PILE UP EARTH BERMS, DIG A CHANNEL THROUGH THEM.
BUT WE NEED TO BRING IN DIRT AND GRAVEL. ELEVEN MEN TO CARRY IT, FIFTEEN TO BUILD IT... FOR EVERY KAN OF CANAL
THE HAN CAN'T AFFORD ANY MORE MEN.
WE'VE USED UP THE SUBSIDIES
AND SOON, RAINY SEASON... ....
IT'S NOT GOING WELL.

THERE'S A CASTLE MEETING TOMORROW, AND I EXPECT THE PROJECT WILL DIE. MUTSUKAWA-SAMA—THE CONSTRUCTION BUGYŌ—MAY DIE AS WELL.
BUT IF THEY CANCEL IT...?!
ONE MORE BAD HARVEST, AND THOUSANDS STARVE.
THE HAN GOES BANKRUPT. THE PEASANTS MIGHT REVOLT.
WE NEED NEW PADDIES, BUT...
SO
DARLING!

CAN'T YOU HELP THE HAN?
I KNOW, DEAR!
I KNOW YOU'VE TAUGHT KOICHIRŌ HOW TO RUN WATER THROUGH DRY LAND. IT'S ONE OF YOUR SECRET JUTSU.
TEN YEARS...
I MARRIED YOU AT SEVENTEEN. THEN KOICHIRŌ CAME...
...AND YOU TOLD ME.
FOR TEN YEARS I'VE KNOWN YOU SERVE THE YAGYŪ.

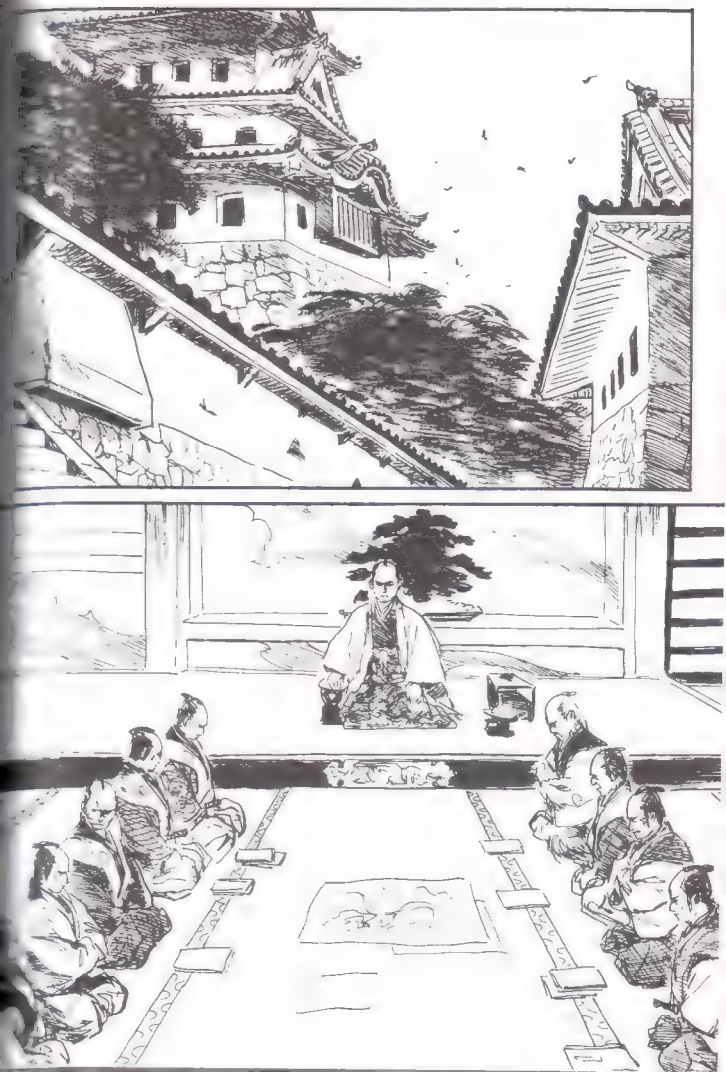
BUT I BORE YOUR SON BEFORE I HEARD OF THE GRASS.
I CAN'T GO BACK NOW. I KNOW THAT IF I TRIED, YOU'D HAVE TO TAKE MY LIFE.
I LIVE AS KUSA, ACCEPT IT EVERY DAY.
AND I'VE BEEN HAPPY
YOU'D DESTROY THAT...?

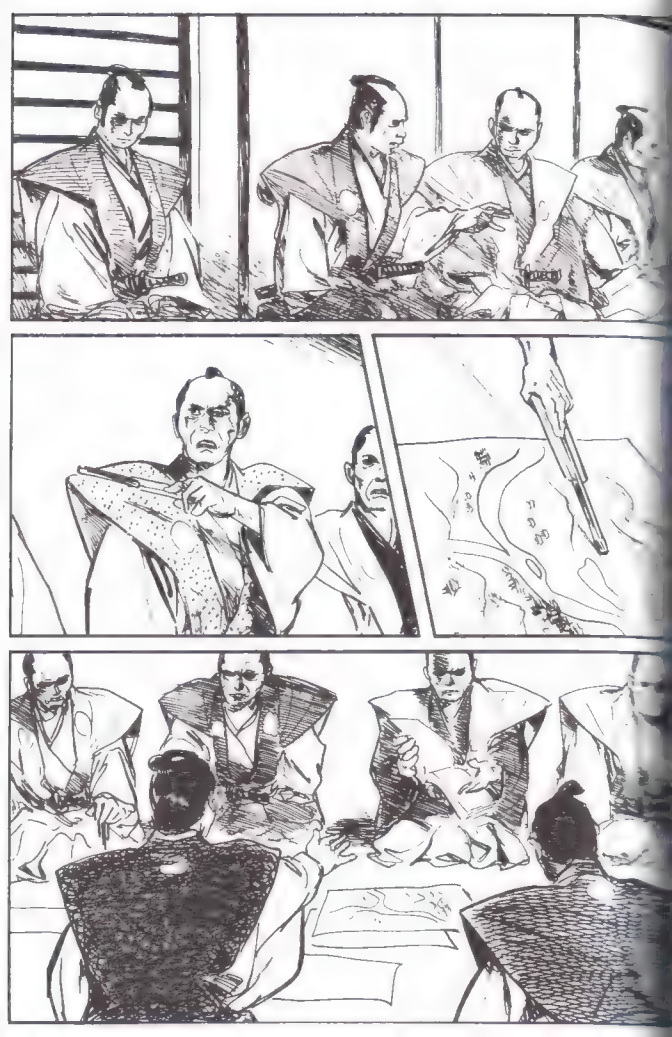
IF I SHARE THE JUTSU, OUR SECRET IS OUT.
WE GRASS WILL WITHER!

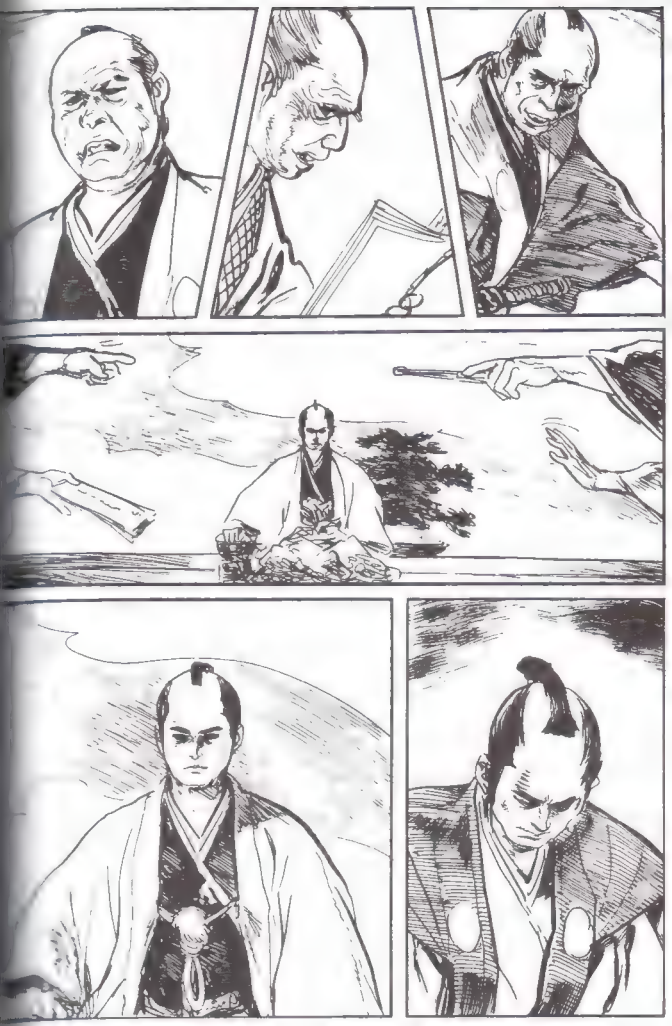
WE DON'T LIVE FOR KOMOROSHI HAN. WE SERVE YAGYŪ-SAMA AND THE HOLLYHOCK CREST.
BUT MY FATHER'S A KOMOROSHI HANSHI! SURELY—

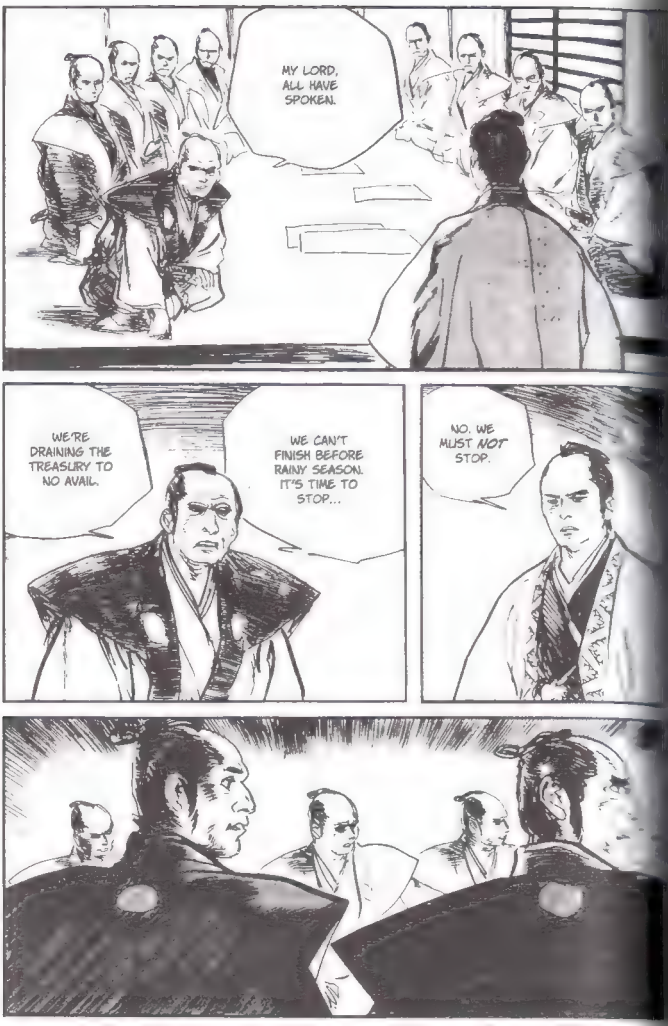
NEVER. THAT'S FINAL.

I'LL BE IN MY ROOM. DON'T WAIT UP

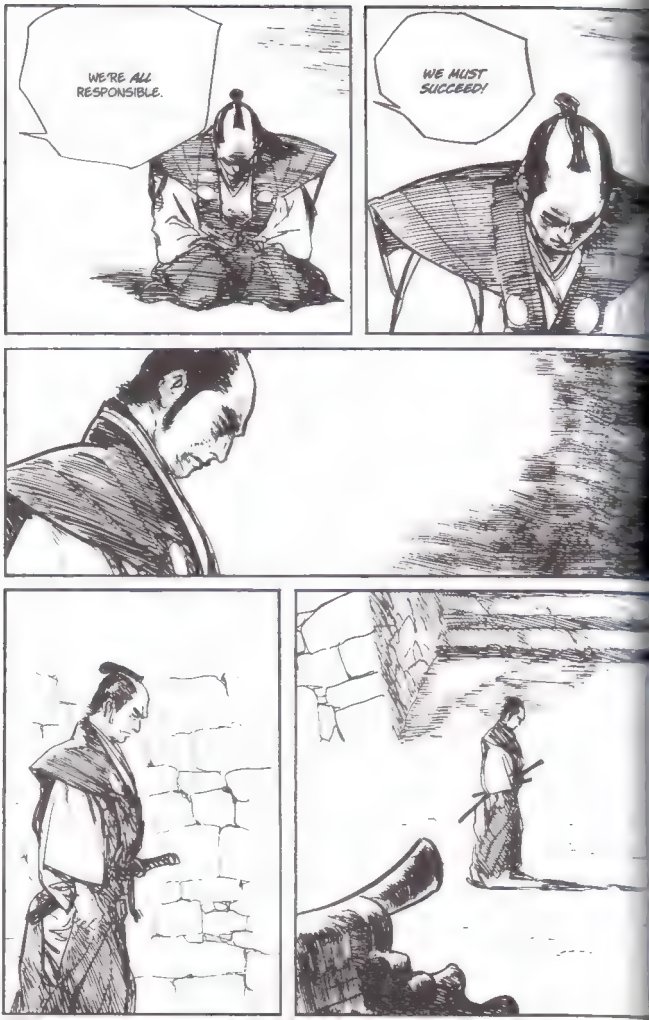




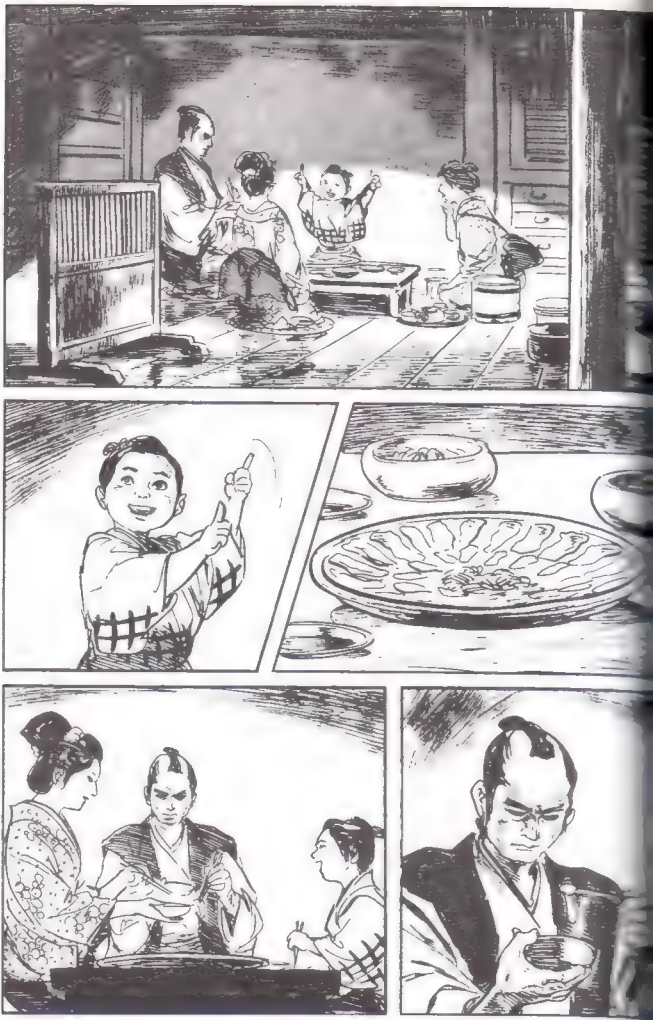


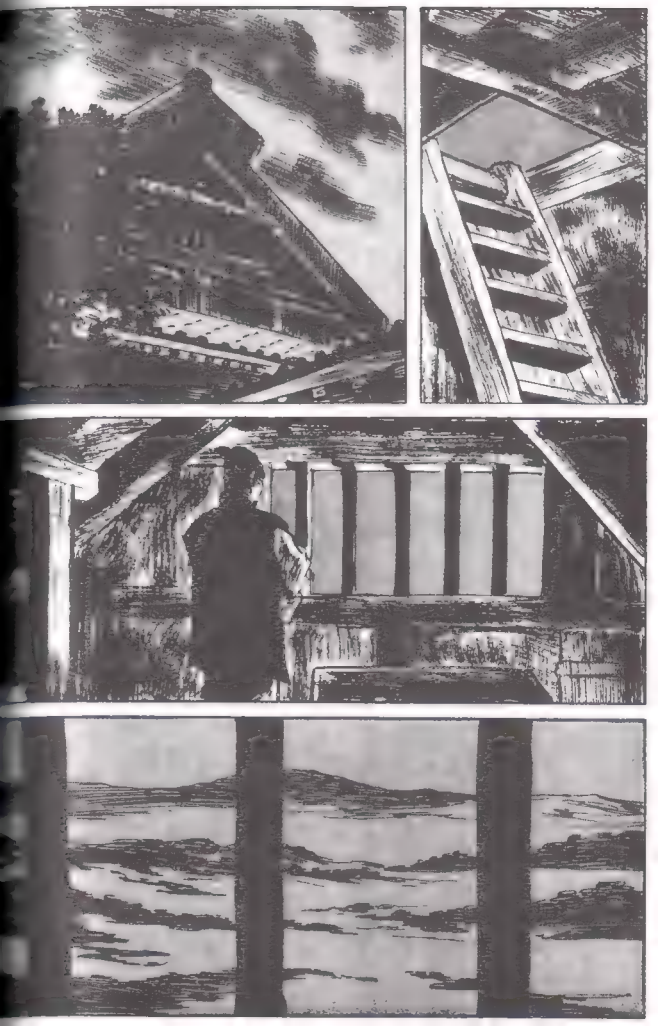

MY LORD, ALL HAVE SPOKEN.
WE'RE DRAINING THE TREASURY TO NO AVAIL.
WE CAN'T FINISH BEFORE RAINY SEASON. IT'S TIME TO STOP...
NO. WE MUST NOT STOP.

A RULER CAN'T THINK ONLY OF THE PRESENT.
FINISH IT! AT *ANY* COST! RAIN OR NO!
WE'LL LIVE ON MILLET AND GRASS!
I'LL CARRY DIRT MYSELF!


WE'RE ALL RESPONSIBLE.
WE MUST SUCCEED!

御影
MM.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK.
MM.
YES, DEAR.
I GUESS WE BETTER LEARN TO LIKE CARP.
DEAR...?

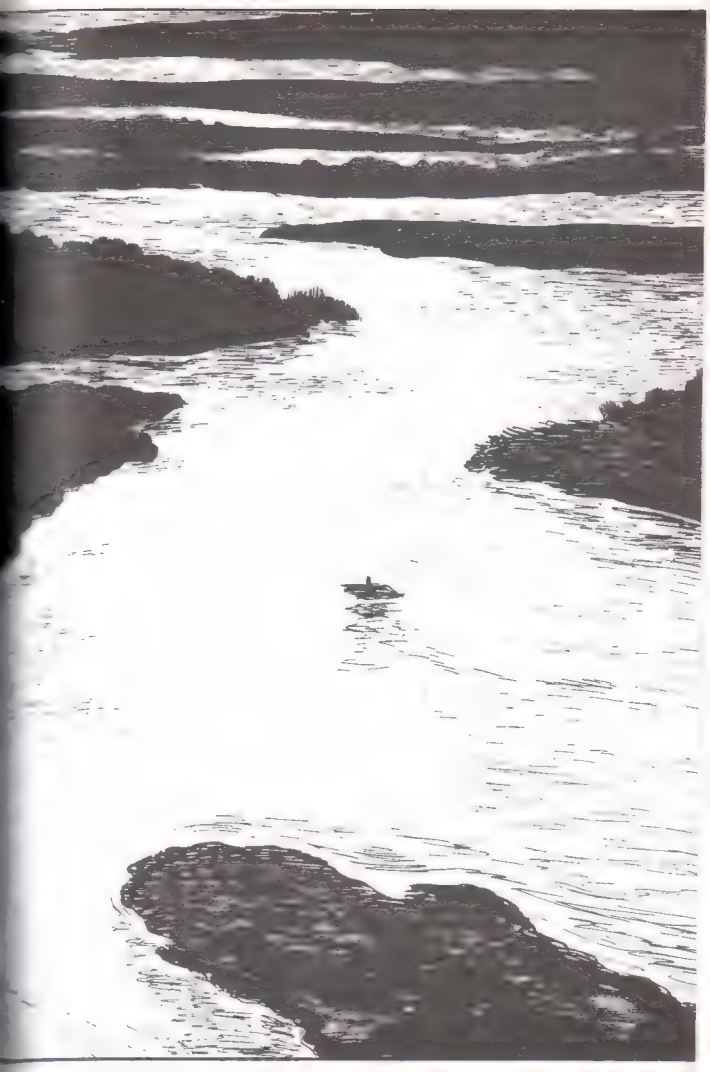


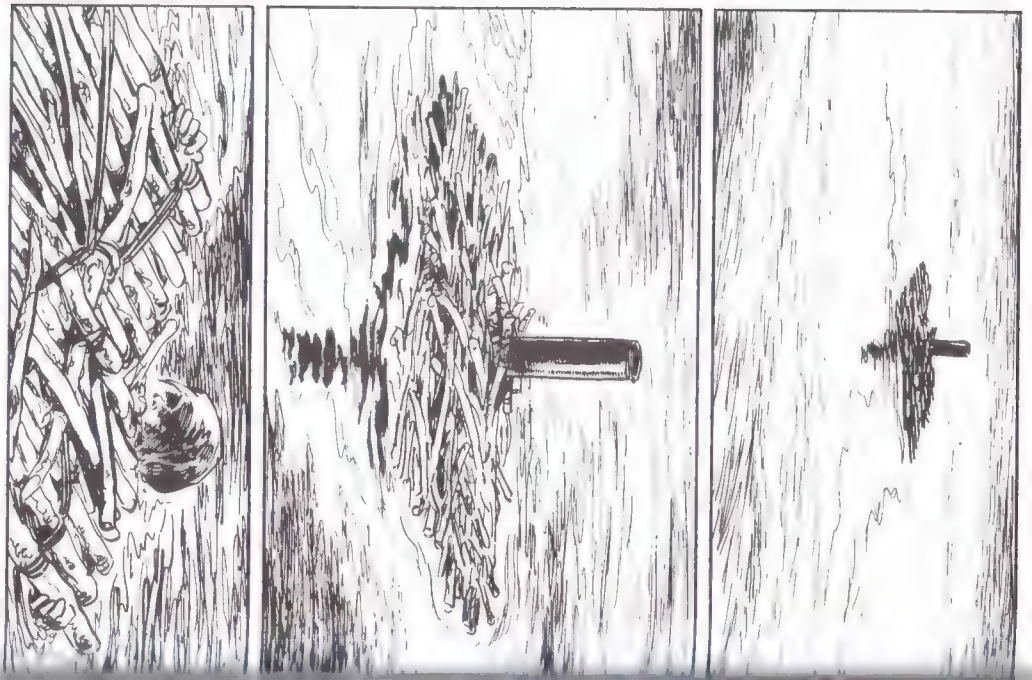


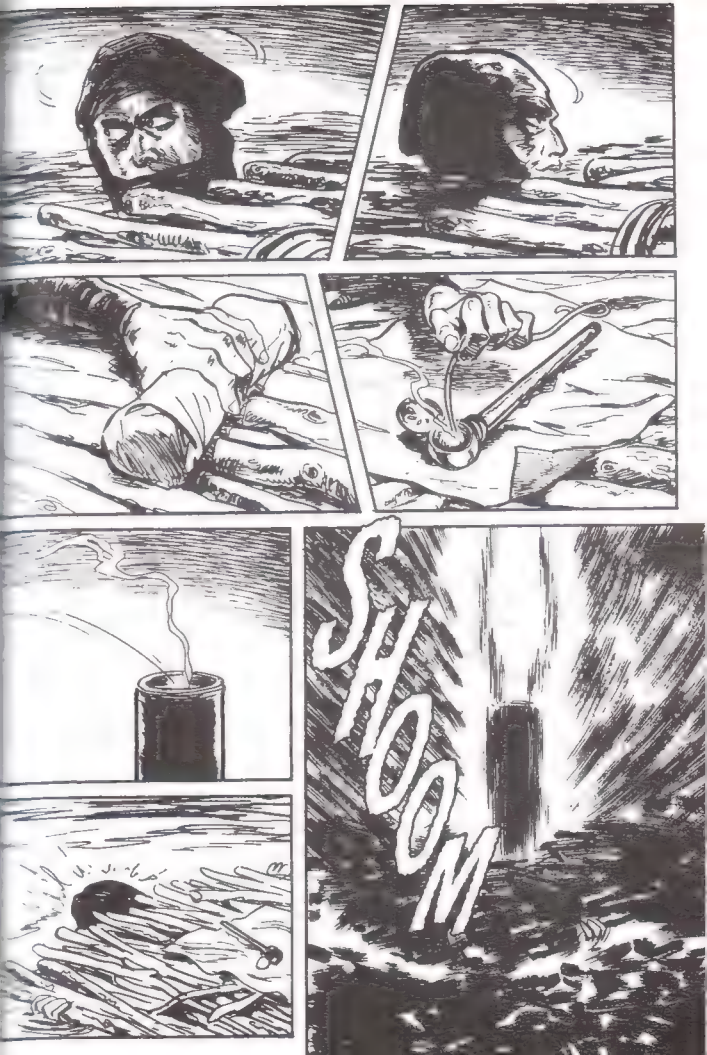
THEY'RE GOING TO BUILD IT.
OUR LORD ASKED ALL TO HELP, AND YET...
SHOOOM

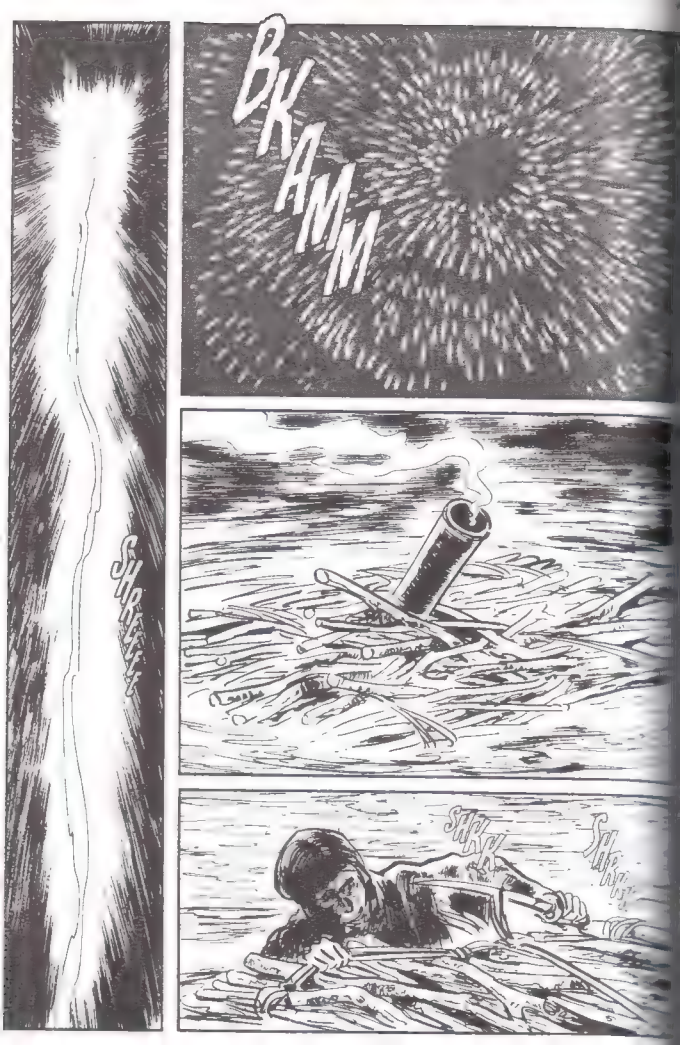
AH...?!

WOL
FGS
OUR
TIME HAS
COME.



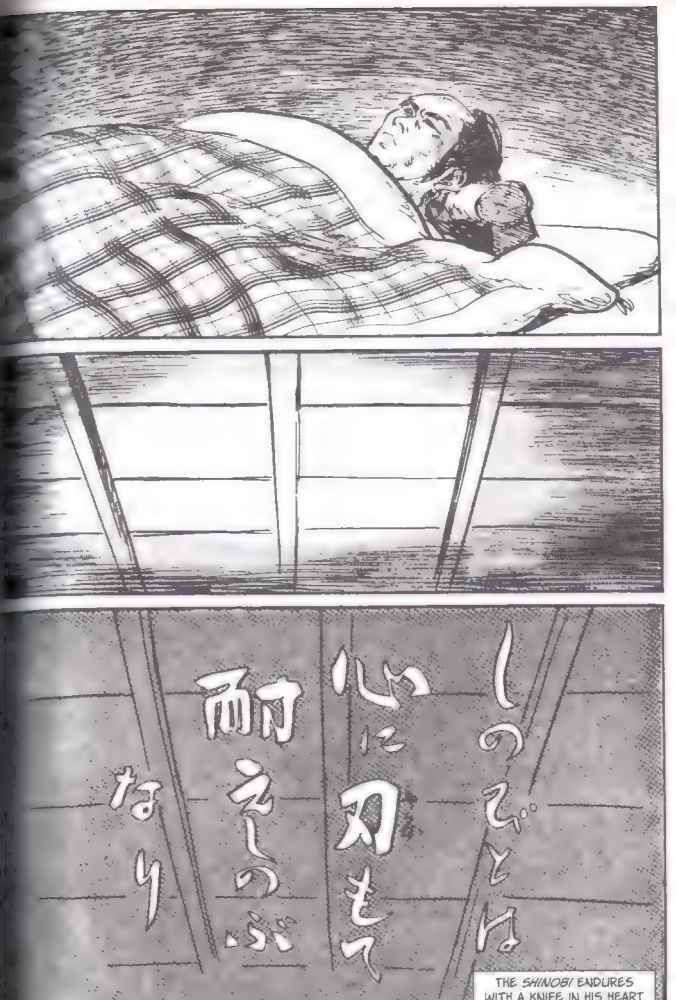



SHOOM


SHRRR

ARE YOU PREPARED UZUMI?

SNIFF
SLEEP BESIDE HIM TONIGHT



THE *SHINOBI* ENDURES
WITH A KNIFE IN HIS HEART

心の上に
刃をおいて
しのべば
即ち
忍なり
ENDURES WITH A
UPON HIS HEART
しのびは
いかで苦しき
忍の道
THE TORTURE
OF DECEIT
忍なり
耐える
こと
なり
THE SHINOBI
ENDURES
忠ある
道も
せんと
思わば
THE S
ABAND
THE
OF FEA

SNIFF

FATHER! I'M ALL READY!
FATHER!

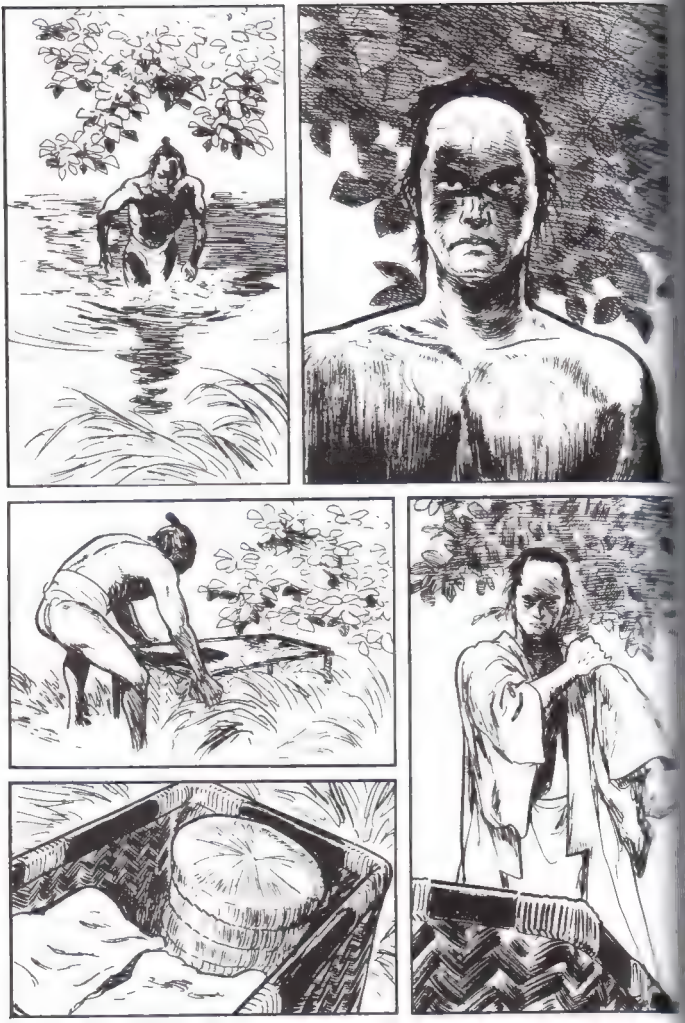
IT'S WONDERFUL! YOU REALLY SAVE THE DAY OFF?!
YES, SON. YOU HAVE THE WORMS?
UH-HUH!
LOTS OF WORMS... AND GRUBS, TOO!
SO LET'S GO
OKAY!
MOTHER...? WHAT'S WRONG?!
SHE'S FINE, SON.

NOW— LET'S SEE YOUR SECRET FISHING HOLE!
YES, FATHER!

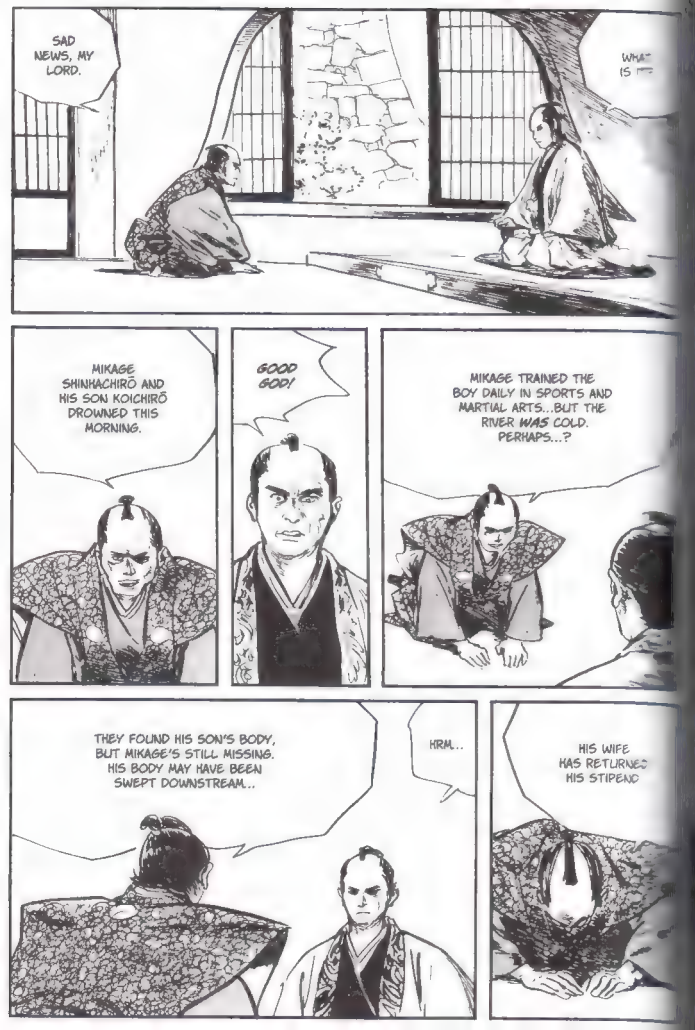
NNGH...!

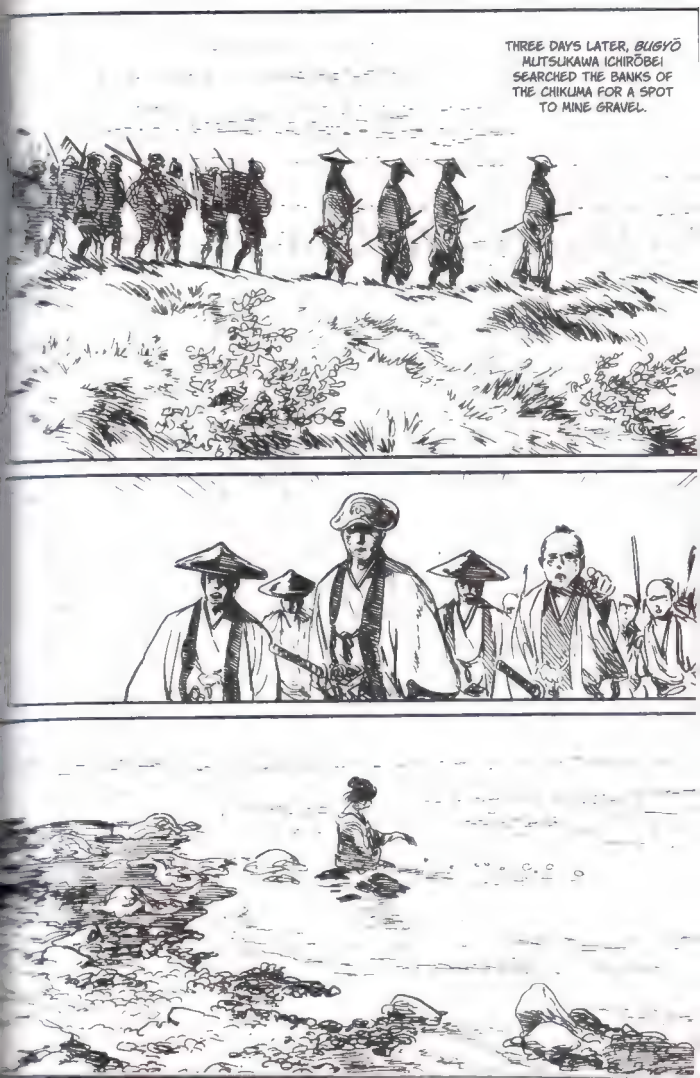
HOT, ISN'T IT? WANT A SWIM?
SURE!

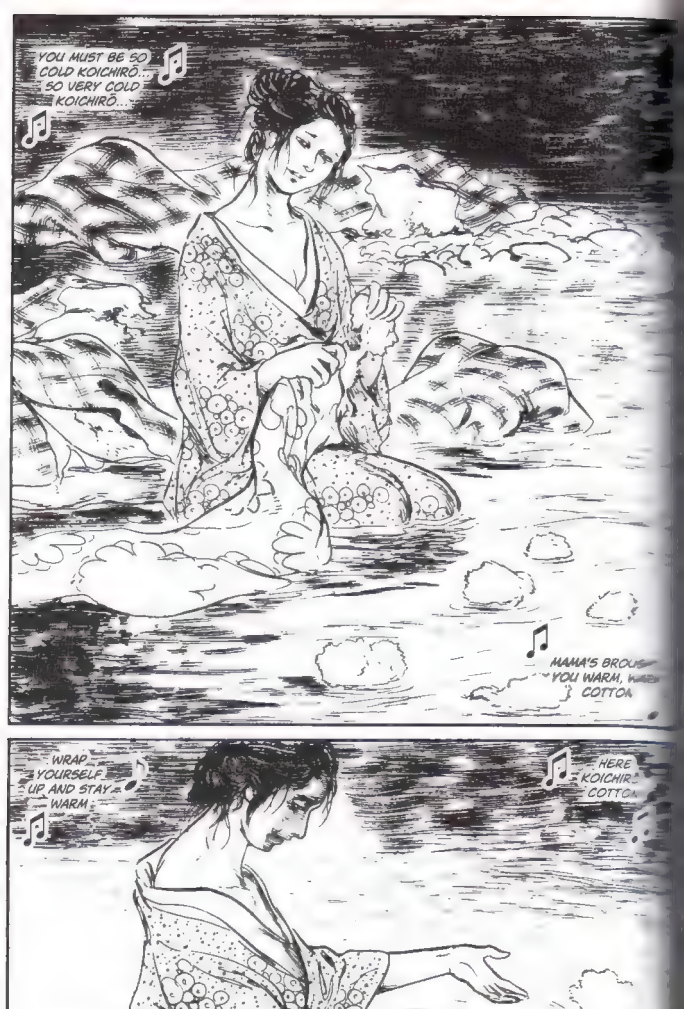
AHH!!

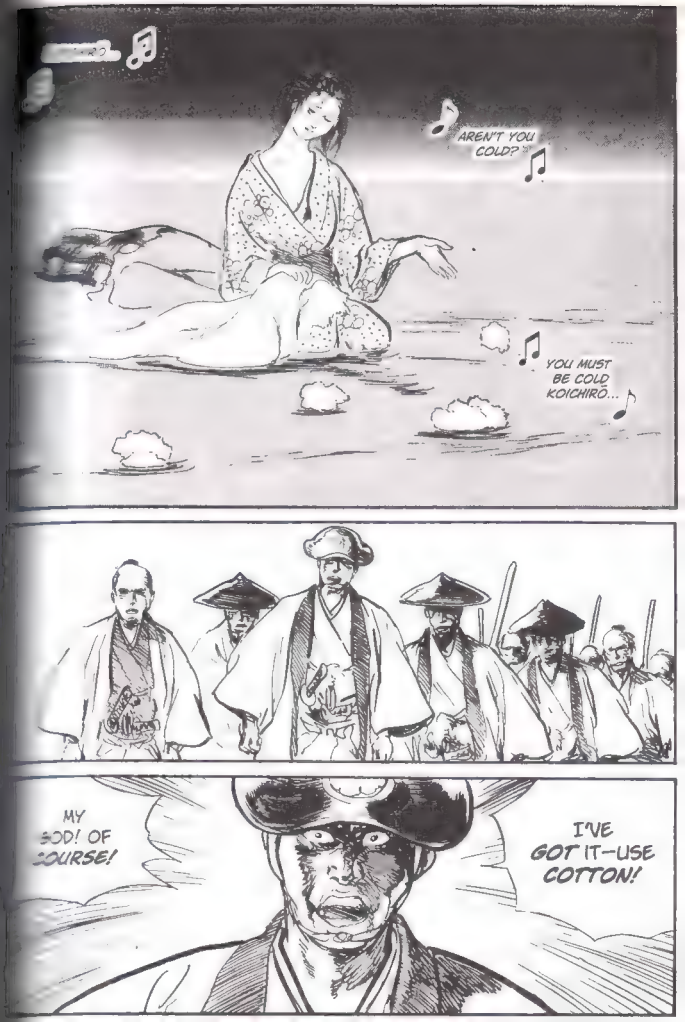


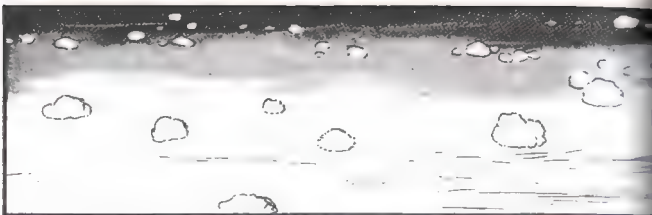
"SHINOBI... ENDURES..."
"KNIFE IN... HEART..."
AUGHH!!
H-HE... ENDURES.
HE ENDURES!


SAD NEWS, MY LORD.
WHAT IS IT?
MIKAGE SHINKACHIRŌ AND HIS SON KOICHIRŌ DROWNED THIS MORNING.
GOOD GOD!
MIKAGE TRAINED THE BOY DAILY IN SPORTS AND MARTIAL ARTS...BUT THE RIVER WAS COLD. PERHAPS...?
THEY FOUND HIS SON'S BODY, BUT MIKAGE'S STILL MISSING. HIS BODY MAY HAVE BEEN SWEPT DOWNSTREAM...
HRM...
HIS WIFE HAS RETURNED HIS STIPEND

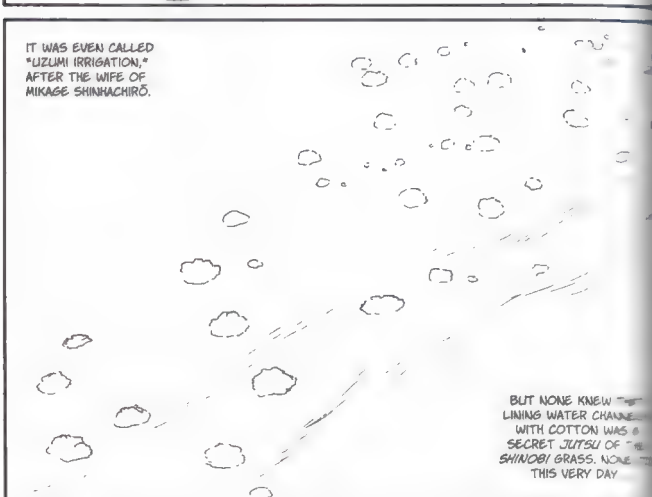

THREE DAYS LATER, *BUGYŌ* MUTSUKAWA ICHIRŌBEI SEARCHED THE BANKS OF THE CHIKUMA FOR A SPOT TO MINE GRAVEL.


YOU MUST BE SO COLD KOICHIRŌ... SO VERY COLD KOICHIRŌ...
MAMA'S BROU
YOU WARM, W
COTTO
WRAP YOURSELF UP AND STAY WARM
HERE KOICHIR
COTTO


AREN'T YOU COLD?
YOU MUST BE COLD KOICHIRO...
MY GOD! OF COURSE!
I'VE GOT IT—USE COTTON!

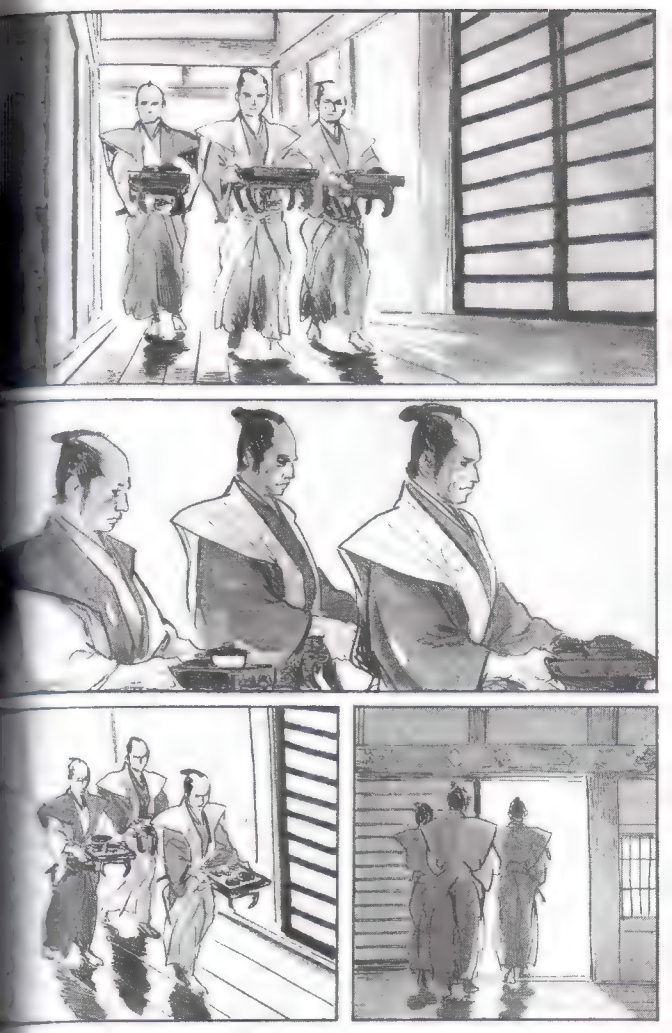


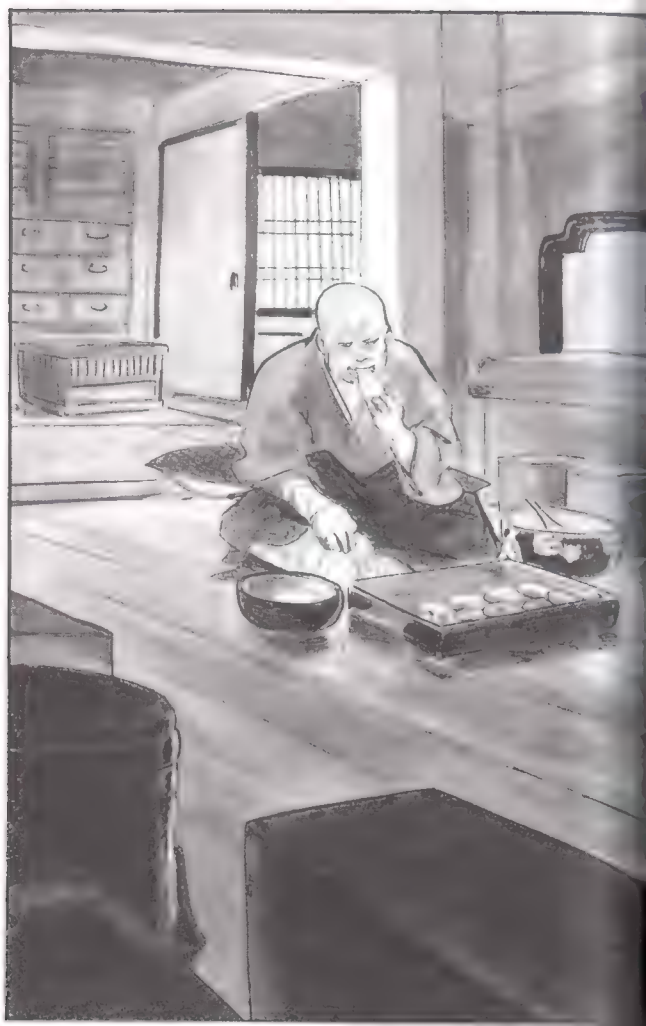
THE HISTORIES OF KOMOROSHI HAN SPEAK OF LINING IRRIGATION CANALS WITH COTTON WADDING TO PREVENT WATER FROM SEEPING OUT THROUGH THE PUMICE.


IT WAS EVEN CALLED "UZUMI IRRIGATION," AFTER THE WIFE OF MIKAGE SHINHACHIRŌ.
BUT NONE KNEW LINING WATER CHANNELS WITH COTTON WAS A SECRET JUTSU OF THE SHINOBI GRASS. NONE THIS VERY DAY

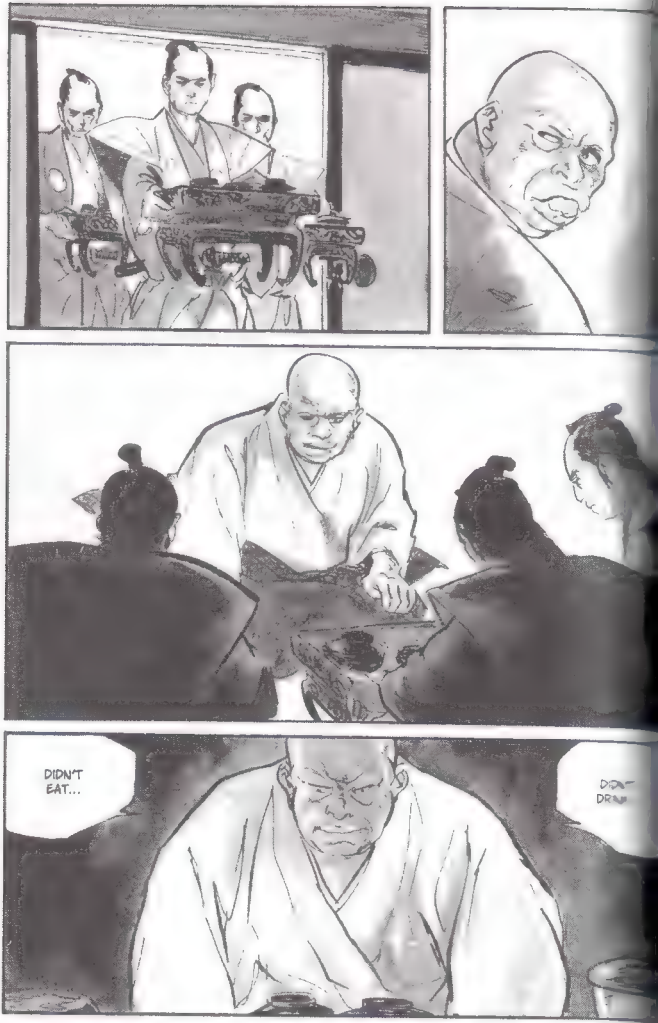
the hundred and twenty-sixth

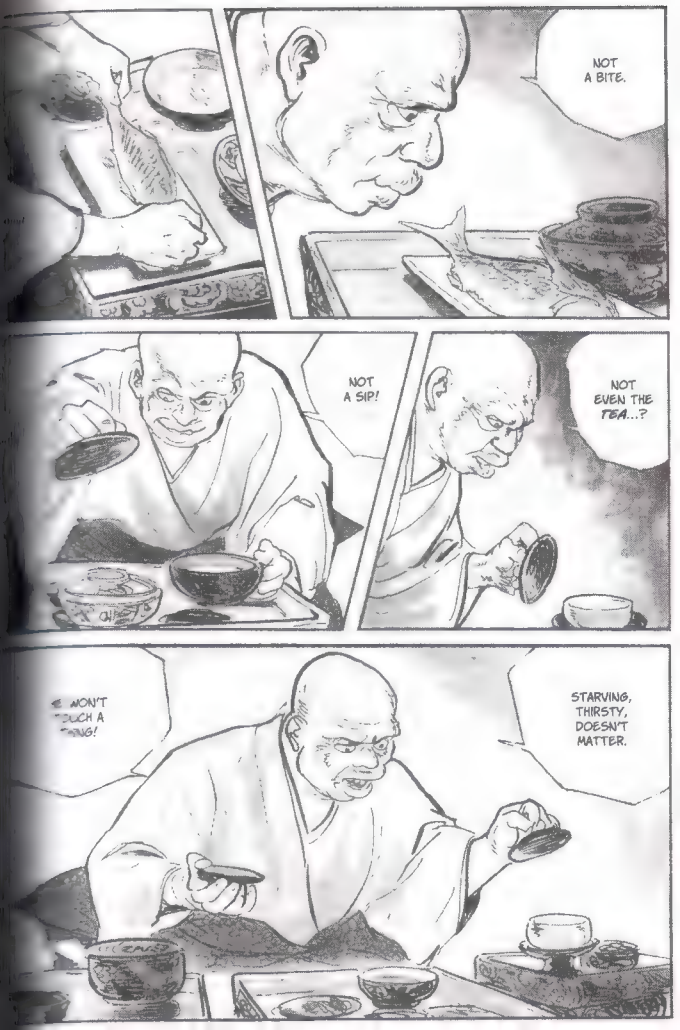
Breakfast, Lunch, Snack, and Brunch

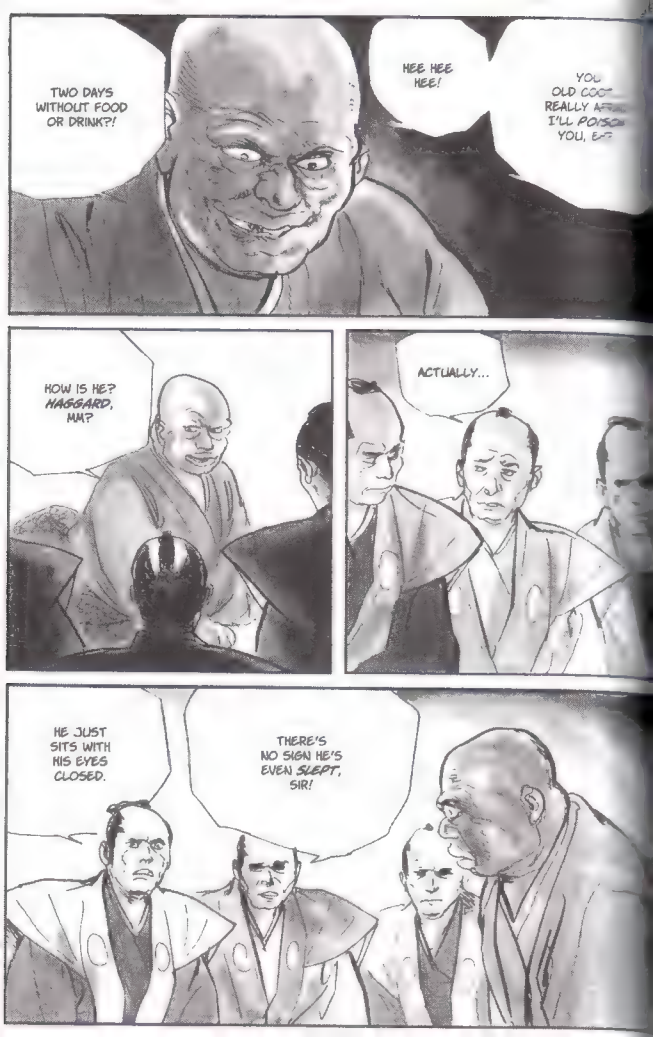


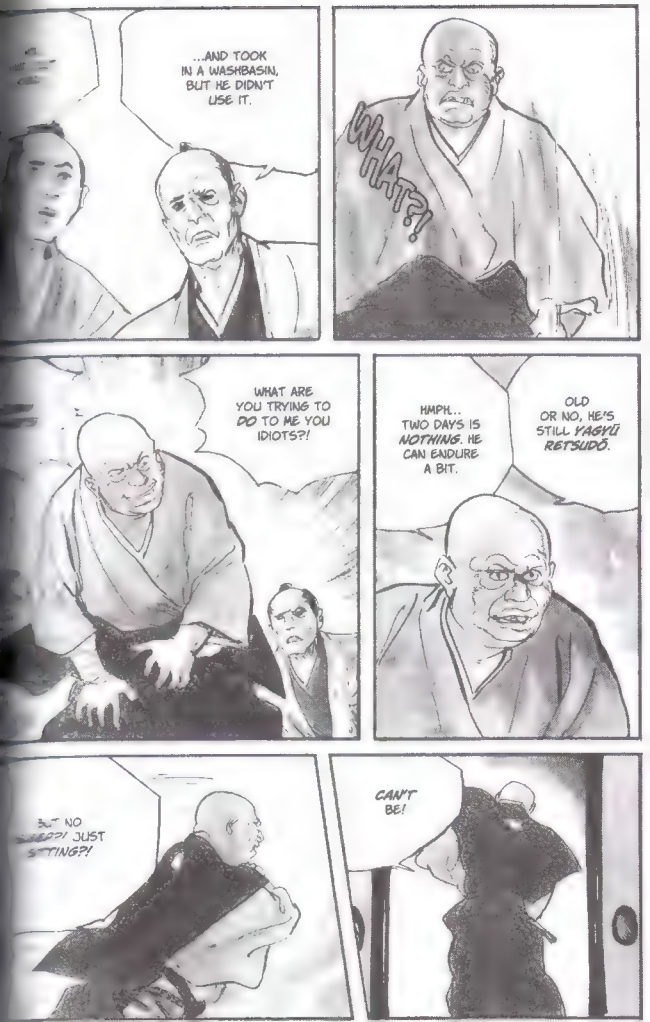


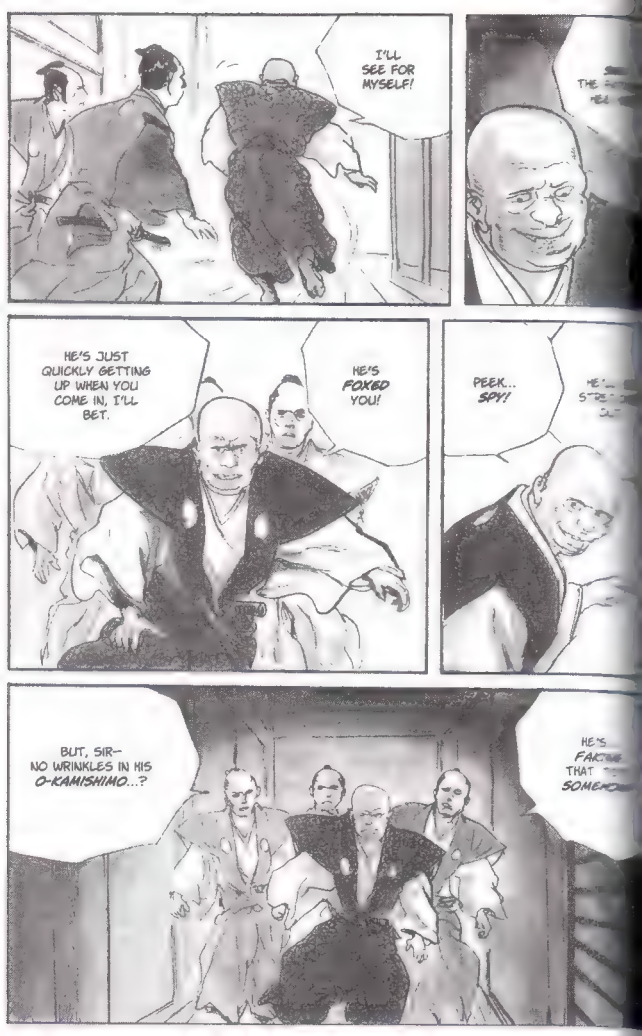
SLURP
MUNCH
MUNCH


DIDN'T
EAT...
DON'T
DRINK

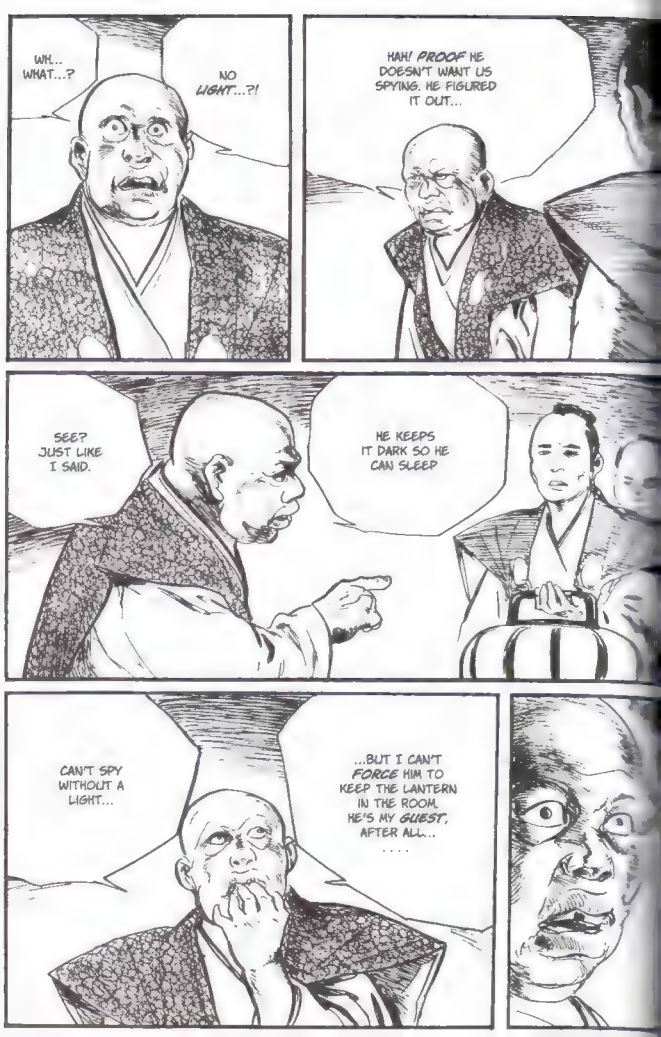

NOT A BITE.
NOT A SIP!
NOT EVEN THE TEA...?
I WON'T TOUCH A THING!
STARVING, THIRSTY, DOESN'T MATTER.

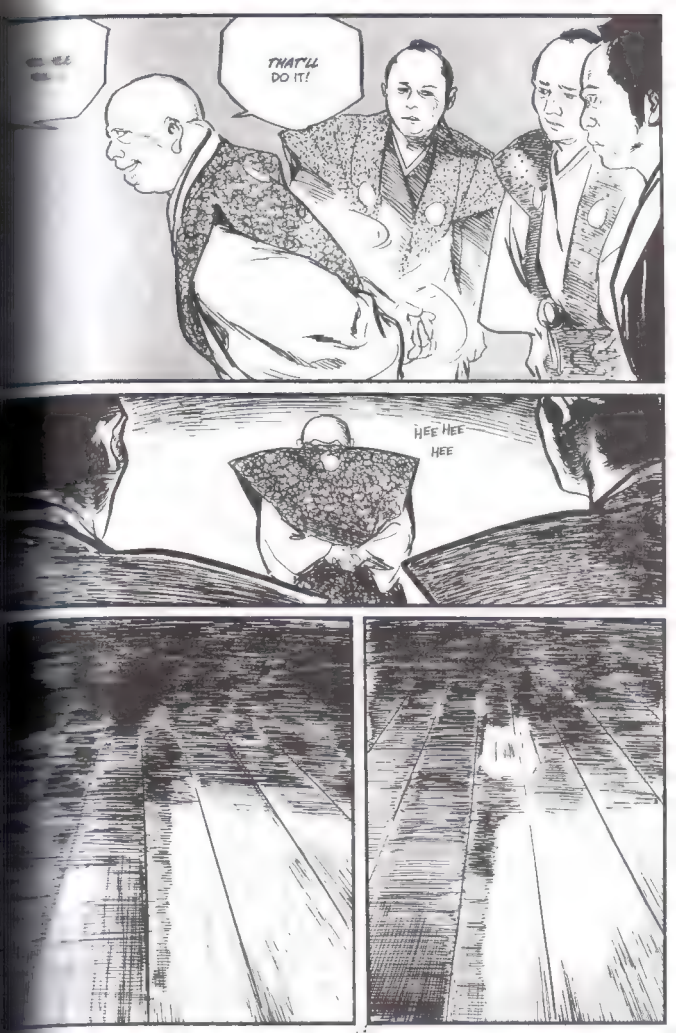

TWO DAYS WITHOUT FOOD OR DRINK?!
HEE HEE HEE!
YOU OLD COOT REALLY AR I'LL POISON YOU, E
HOW IS HE? HAGGARD, MM?
ACTUALLY...
HE JUST SITS WITH HIS EYES CLOSED.
THERE'S NO SIGN HE'S EVEN SLEPT, SIR!

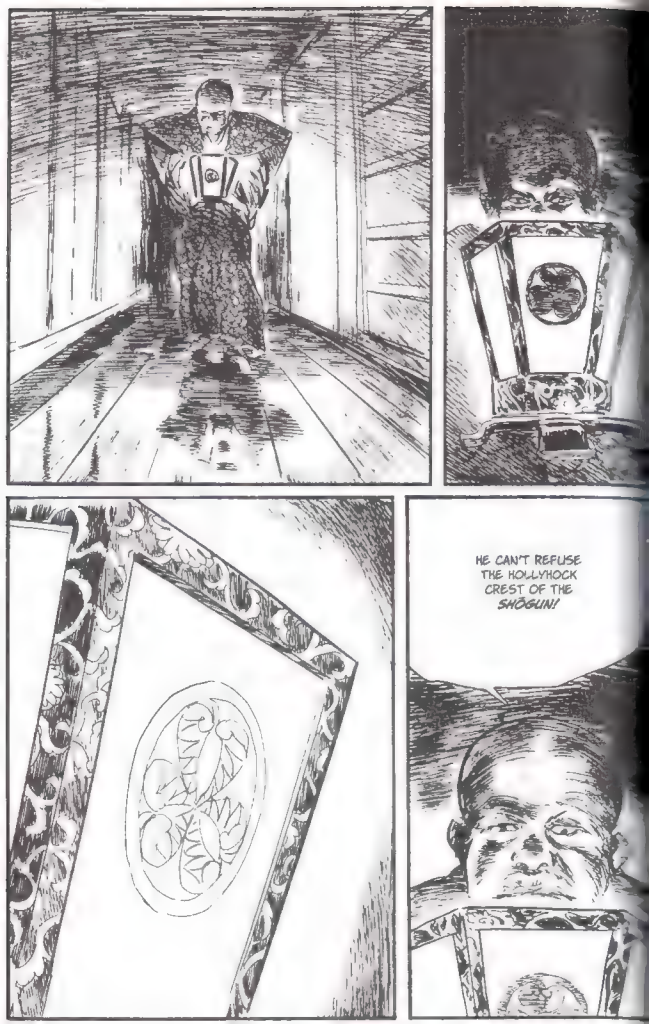

...AND TOOK IN A WASHBASIN, BUT HE DIDN'T USE IT.
WHAT?!
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO TO ME YOU IDIOTS?!
HMPH.. TWO DAYS IS NOTHING. HE CAN ENDURE A BIT.
OLD OR NO, HE'S STILL YAGYŪ RETSUDŌ.
BUT NO [illegible]?! JUST SITTING?!
CAN'T BE!

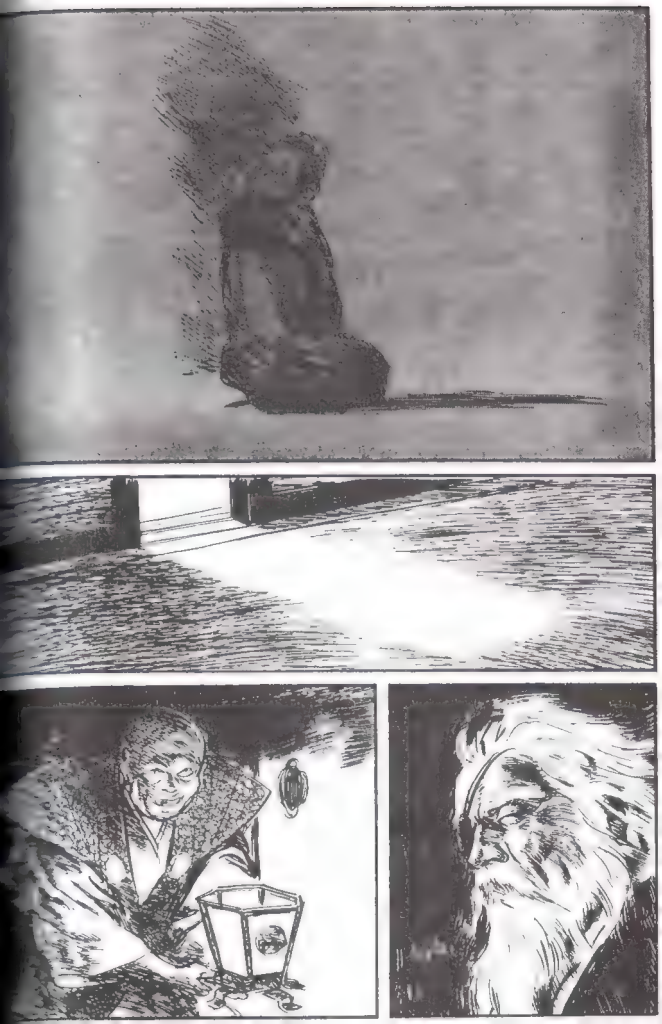

I'LL SEE FOR MYSELF!
HE'S JUST QUICKLY GETTING UP WHEN YOU COME IN, I'LL BET.
HE'S FOXED YOU!
PEEK... SPY!
BUT, SIR— NO WRINKLES IN HIS O-KAMISHIMO...?

WHAT'S THIS?!
RETSUDÔ-SAMA SAID...
..HE DOESN'T NEED A LIGHT.

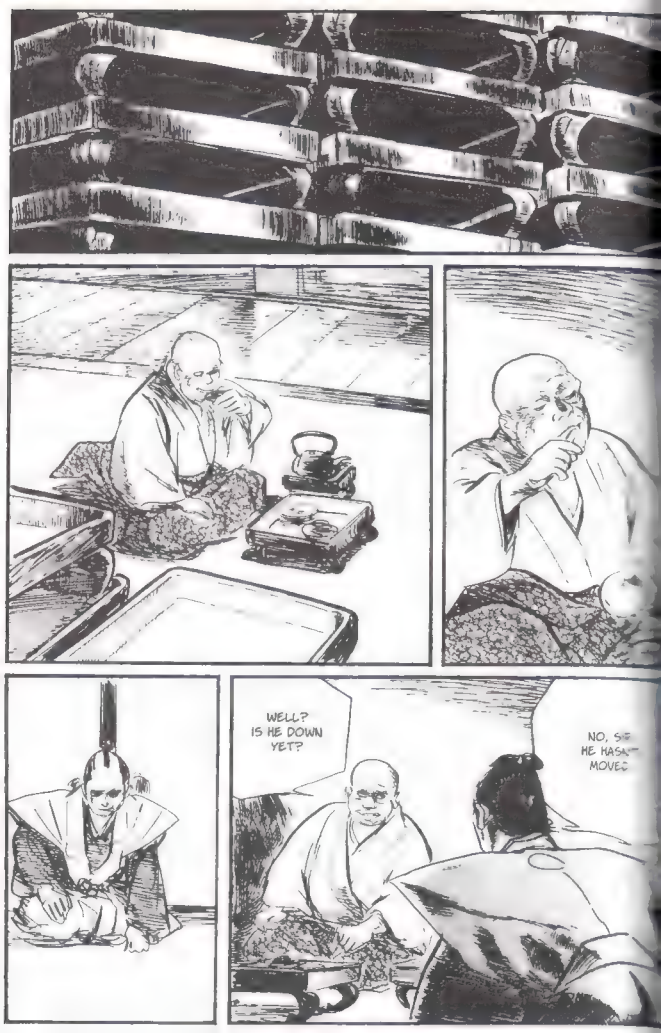

WH... WHAT...?
NO LIGHT...?!
HAH! PROOF HE DOESN'T WANT US SPYING. HE FIGURED IT OUT...
SEE? JUST LIKE I SAID.
HE KEEPS IT DARK SO HE CAN SLEEP
CAN'T SPY WITHOUT A LIGHT...
...BUT I CAN'T FORCE HIM TO KEEP THE LANTERN IN THE ROOM. HE'S MY GUEST, AFTER ALL...
....

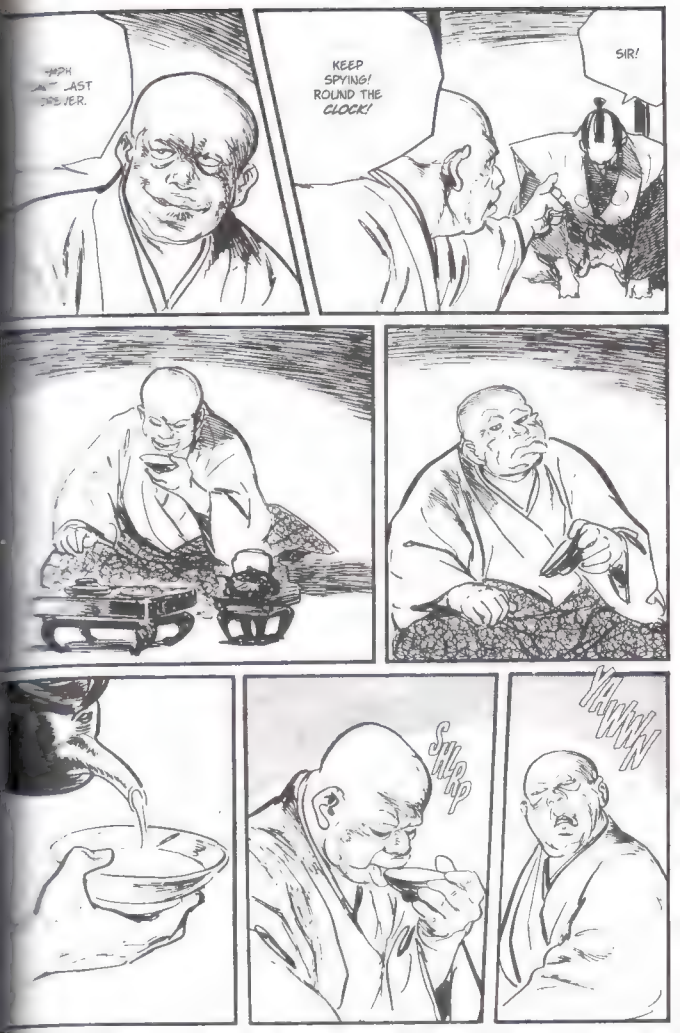

THAT'LL DO IT!
HEE HEE HEE


HE CAN'T REFUSE THE HOLLYHOCK CREST OF THE SHŌGUN!

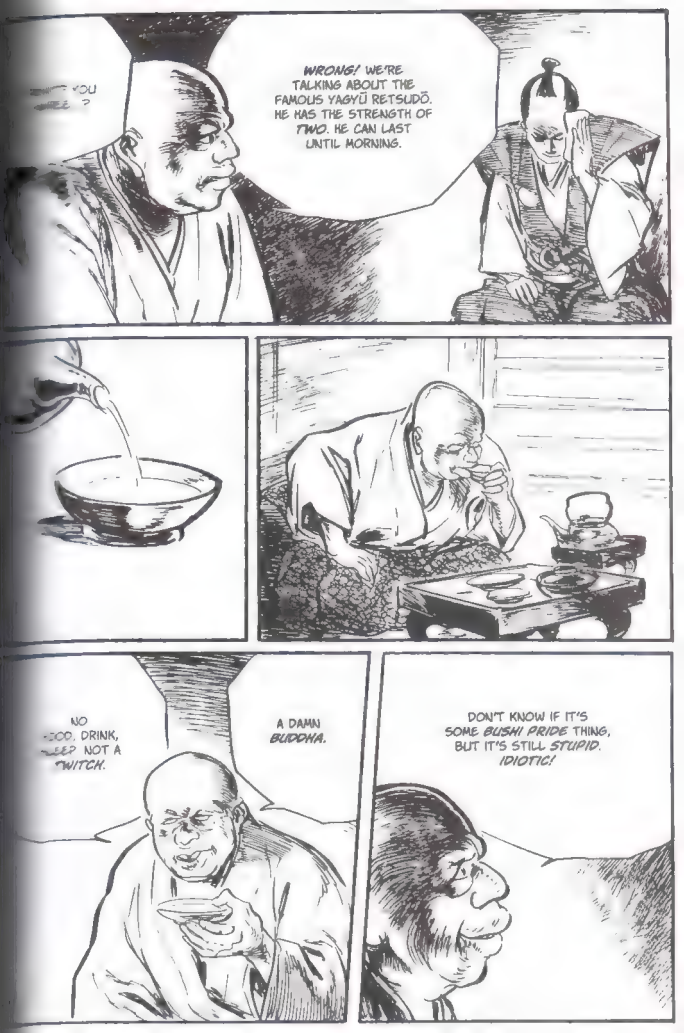


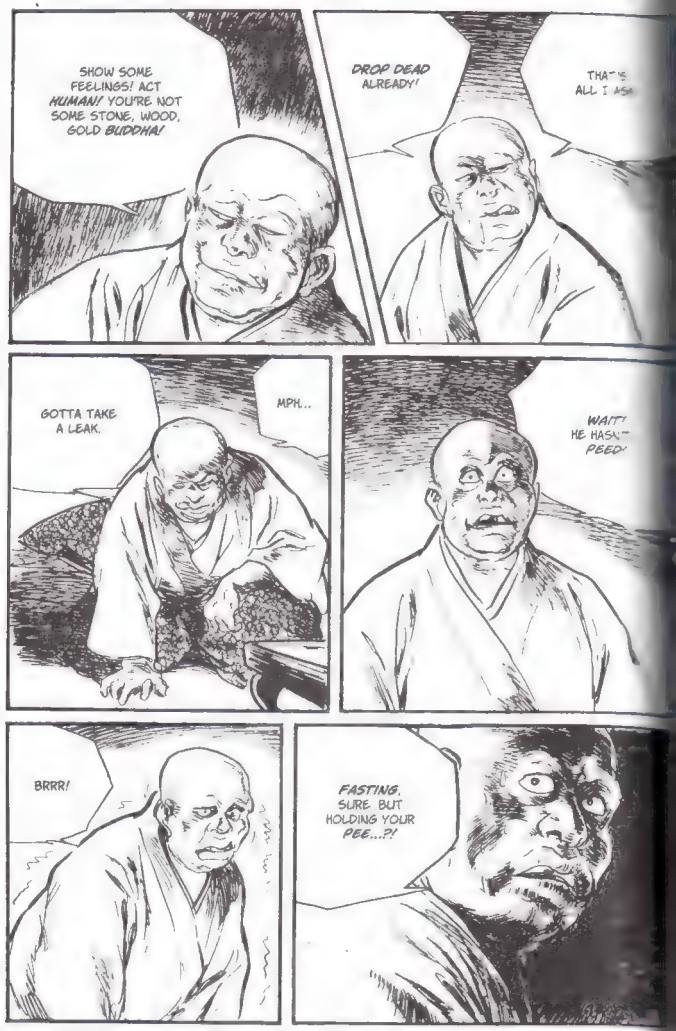
PLEASE...
THEY SAY ONLY *BATS* AND *BANDITS* LOVE THE DARK.
SURELY YOU DON'T AS WELL... RETSUDŌ-*SAMA*.

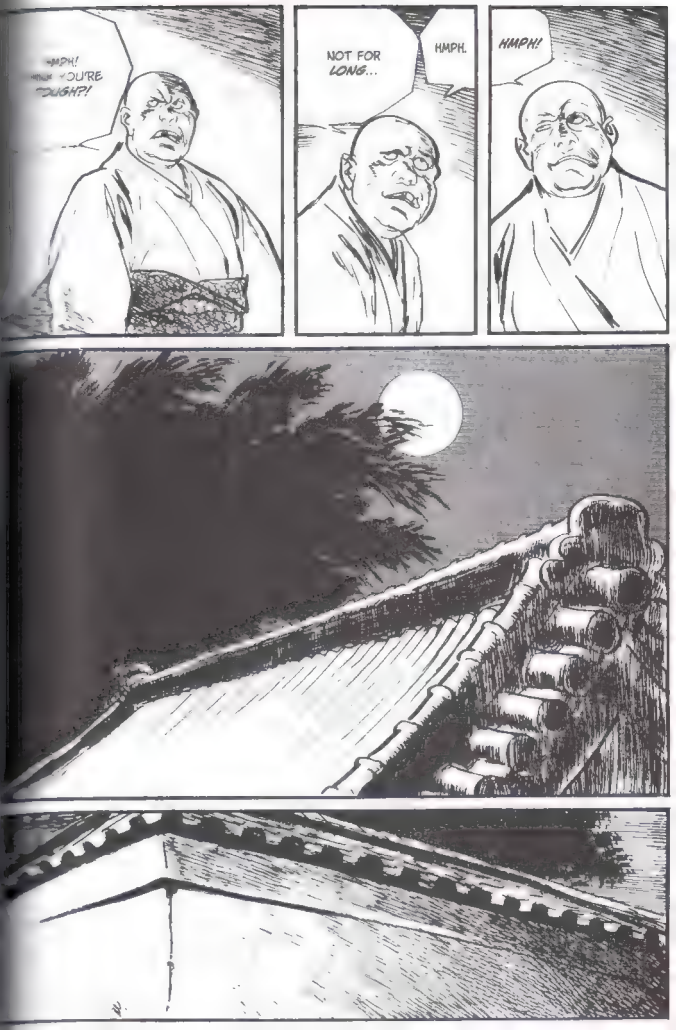

WELL? IS HE DOWN YET?
NO, SIR HE HASN'T MOVED

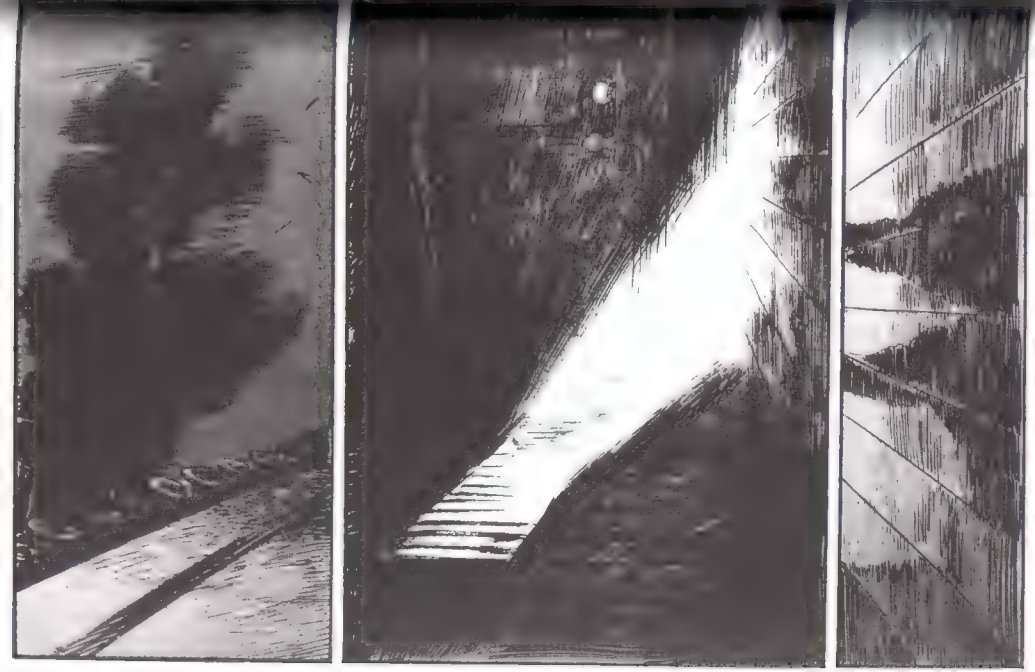

...AST PREVER.
KEEP SPYING! ROUND THE CLOCK!
SIR!
SLURP
YAWWN

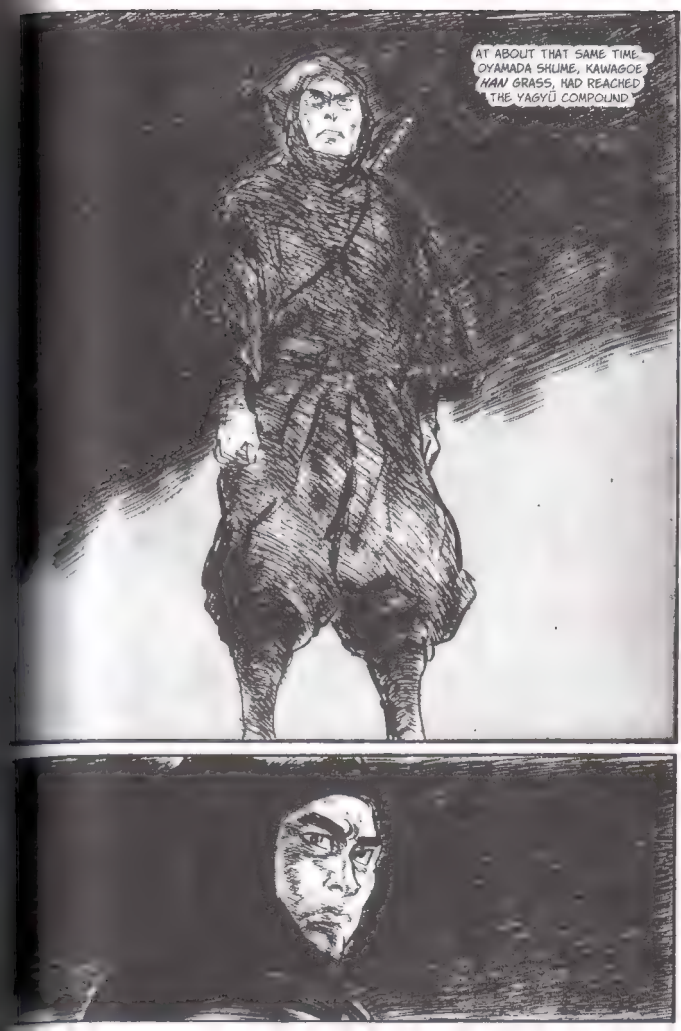
ASLEEP...?
NO, SIR.
LYING DOWN, THEN?
NO, SIR. STILL AS STONE.
WHAT TIME IS IT?!
IT'S NEARLY ELEVEN, SIR.
TWO AND A HALF DAYS... HMM.
SURELY IN JUST A FEW MORE HOURS

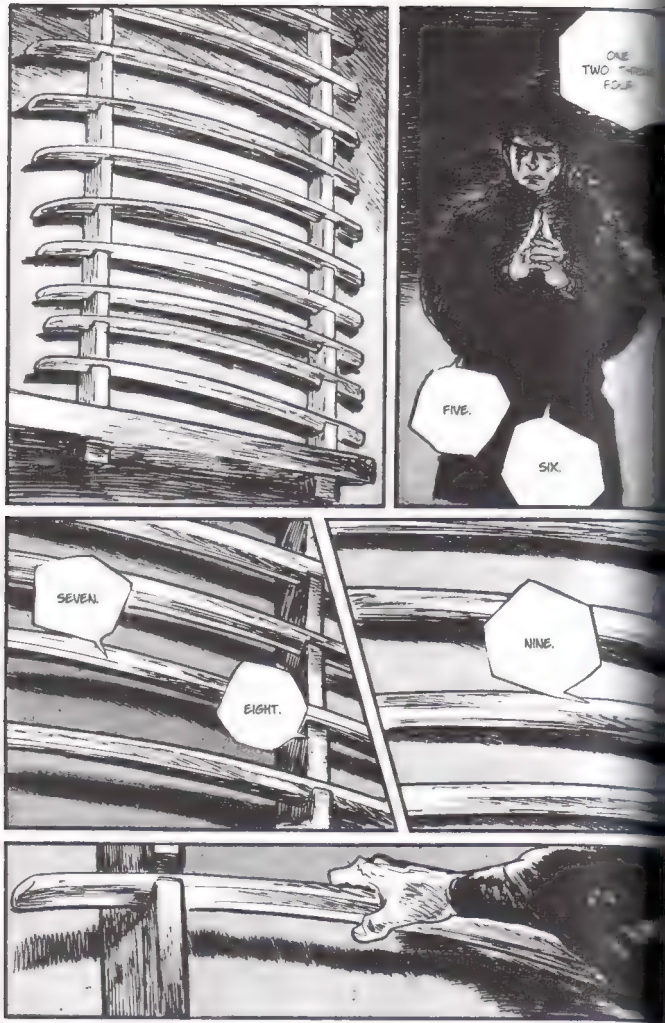

YOU
?
WRONG! WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE FAMOUS YAGYŪ RETSUDŌ. HE HAS THE STRENGTH OF TWO. HE CAN LAST UNTIL MORNING.
NO
OOD. DRINK,
EE? NOT A
WITCH.
A DAMN BUDDHA.
DON'T KNOW IF IT'S SOME BUSHI PRIDE THING, BUT IT'S STILL STUPID. IDIOTIC!

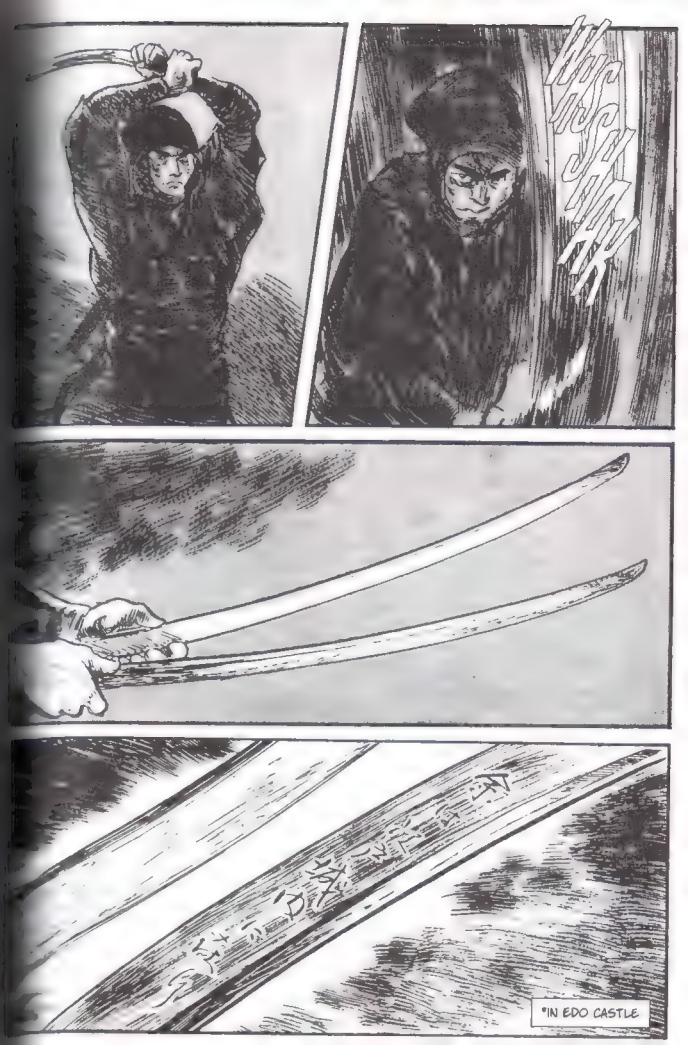

SHOW SOME FEELINGS! ACT HUMAN! YOU'RE NOT SOME STONE, WOOD, GOLD BUDDHA!
DROP DEAD ALREADY!
THAT'S ALL I ASK
GOTTA TAKE A LEAK.
MPH...
WAIT! HE HASN'T PEED!
BRRR!
FASTING, SURE. BUT HOLDING YOUR PEE...?!


HMPH!
YOU'RE
TOUGH!
NOT FOR
LONG...
HMPH.
HMPH!




AT ABOUT THAT SAME TIME, OYAMADA SHUME, KAWAGOE HAN GRASS, HAD REACHED THE YAGYŪ COMPOUND.

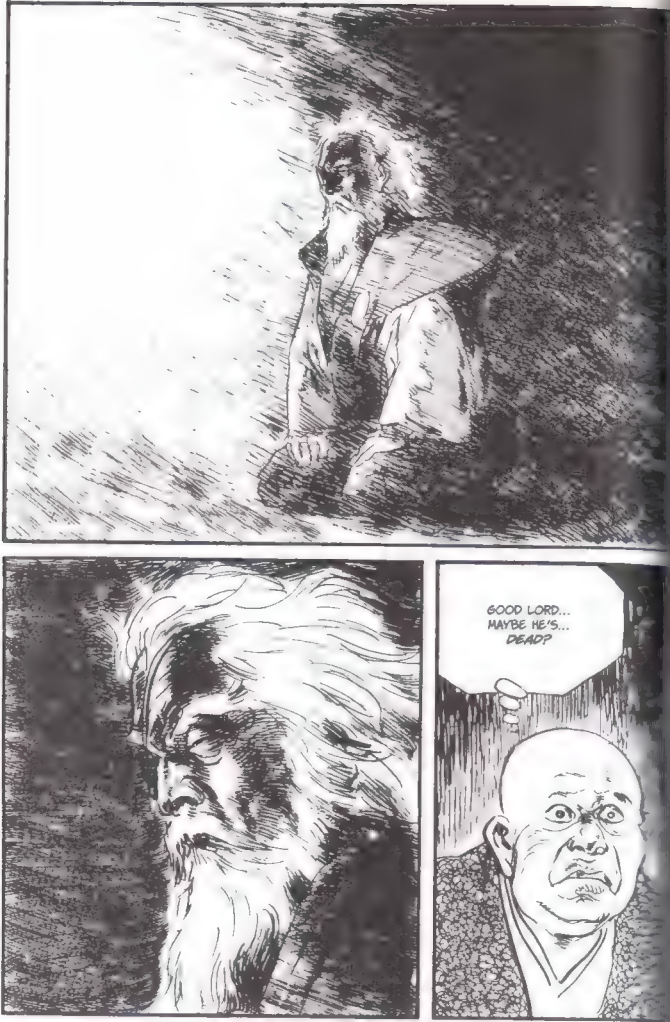

ONE
TWO
FOUR
FIVE.
SIX.
SEVEN.
EIGHT.
NINE.


*IN EDO CASTLE

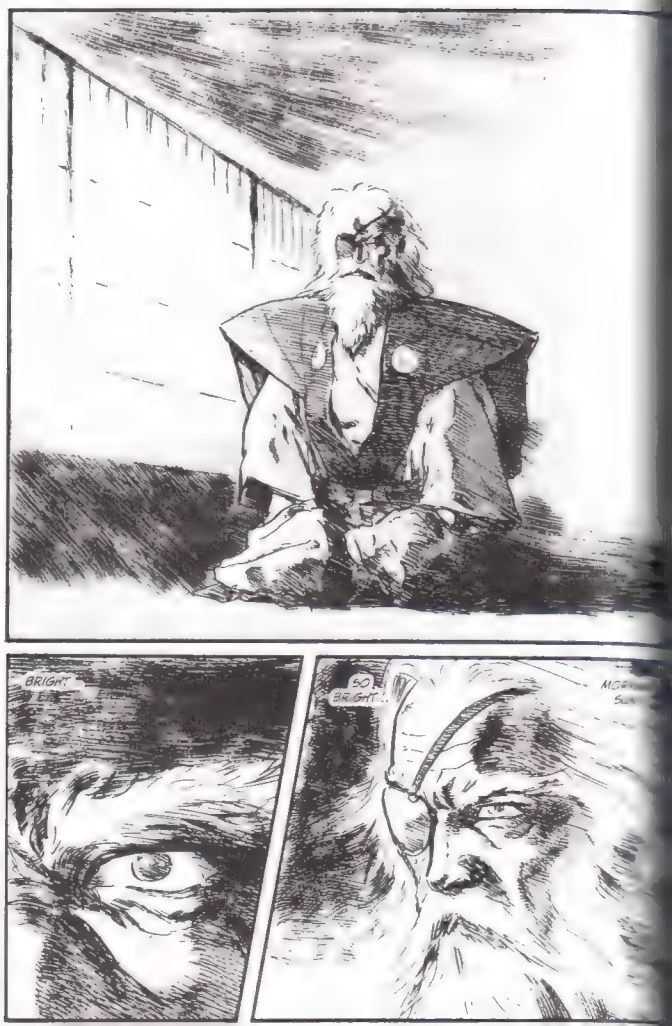
SIR
GO-SHIHAI.
COME ON GOTTA CRACK SOON

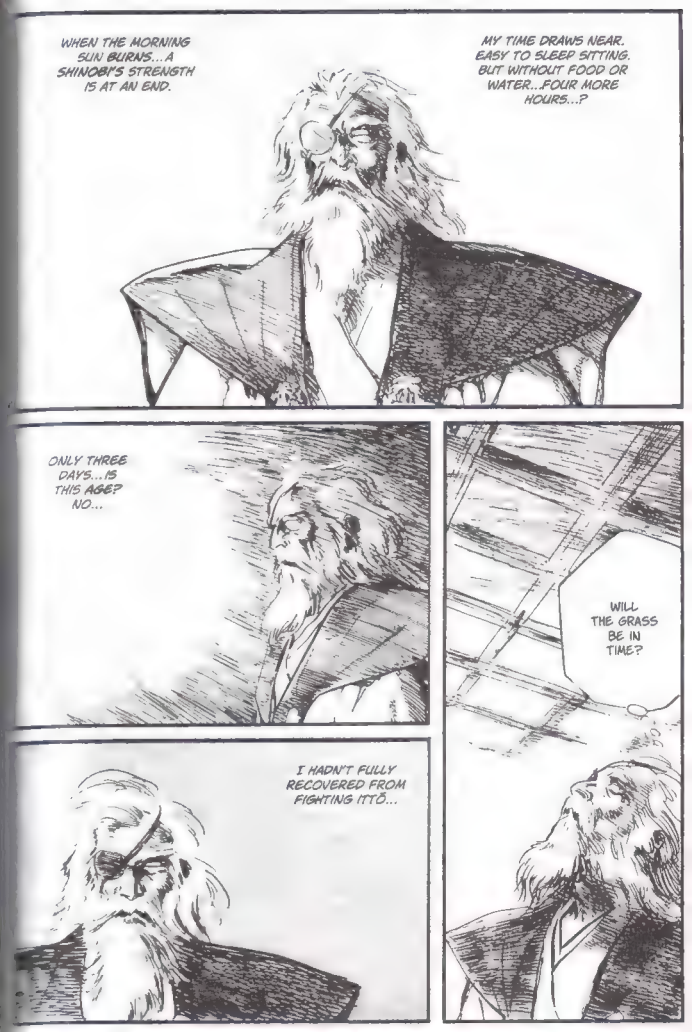
NO PEE..
PEE--PEE..
YAWWN
SIR!!
EK!
A...
DREAM?

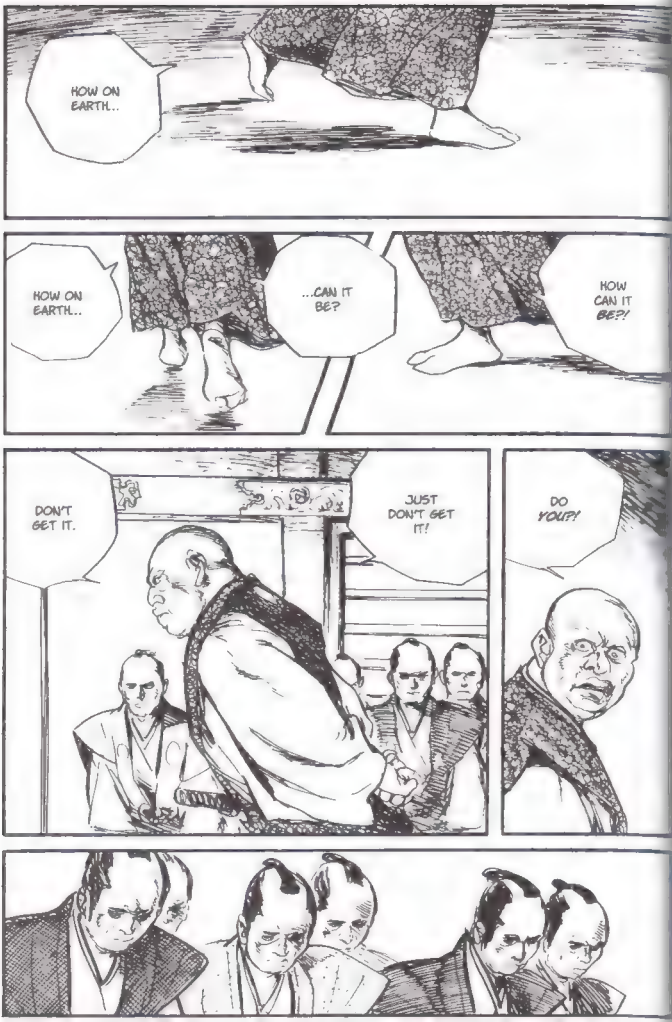
THREE DAYS?! IMPOSSIBLE!
ABSURD!
YOU'RE *REALLY* WATCHING?! EVERY SECOND?!

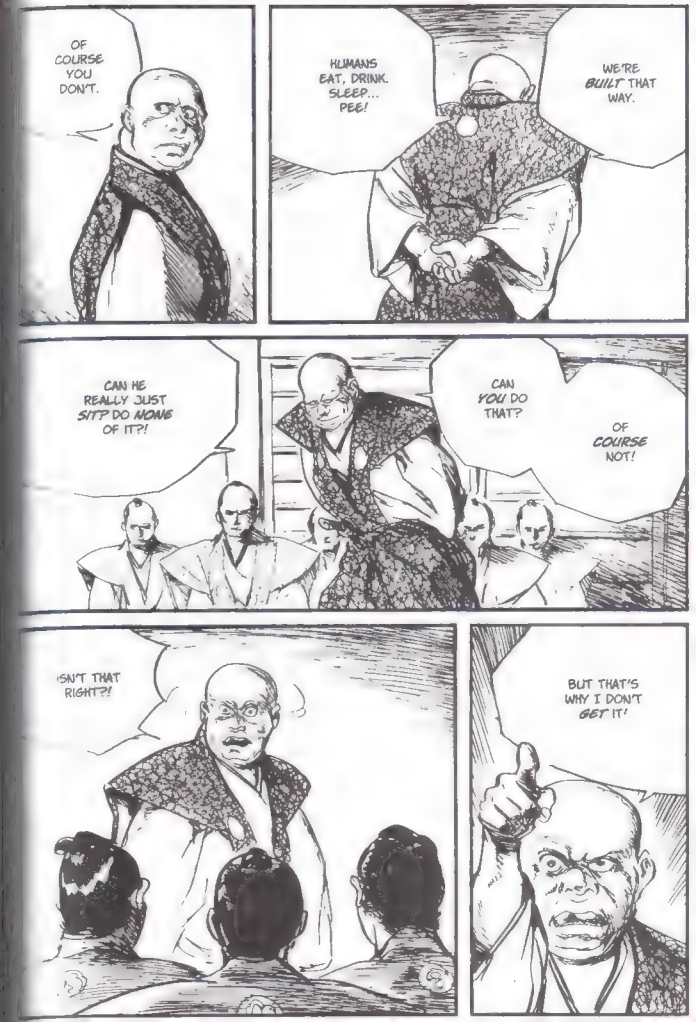

GOOD LORD... MAYBE HE'S... DEAD?

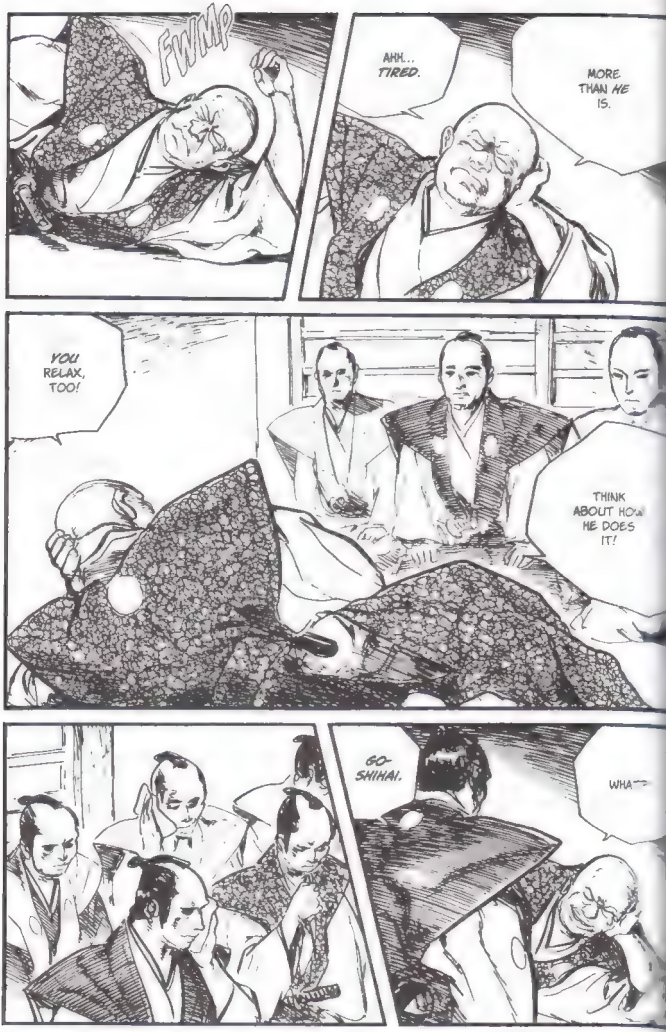
YEEK!


BRIGHT
SO BRIGHT!
MOR
SUN


WHEN THE MORNING SUN BURNS...A SHINOBI'S STRENGTH IS AT AN END.
MY TIME DRAWS NEAR. EASY TO SLEEP SITTING. BUT WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER...FOUR MORE HOURS...?
ONLY THREE DAYS...IS THIS AGE? NO...
WILL THE GRASS BE IN TIME?
I HADN'T FULLY RECOVERED FROM FIGHTING ITTŌ...


HOW ON EARTH..
HOW ON EARTH..
...CAN IT BE?
HOW CAN IT BE?!
DON'T GET IT.
JUST DON'T GET IT!
DO YOU?!

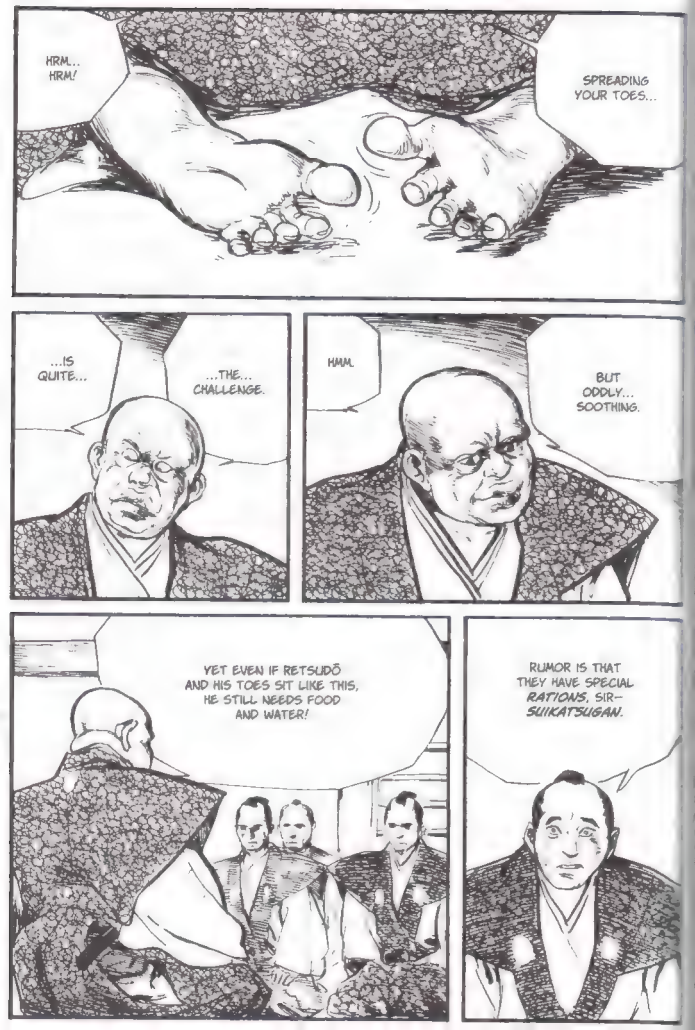

OF COURSE YOU DON'T.
HUMANS EAT, DRINK. SLEEP... PEE!
WE'RE BUILT THAT WAY.
CAN HE REALLY JUST SIT? DO NOTHING OF IT?!
CAN YOU DO THAT?
OF COURSE NOT!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?!
BUT THAT'S WHY I DON'T GET IT!

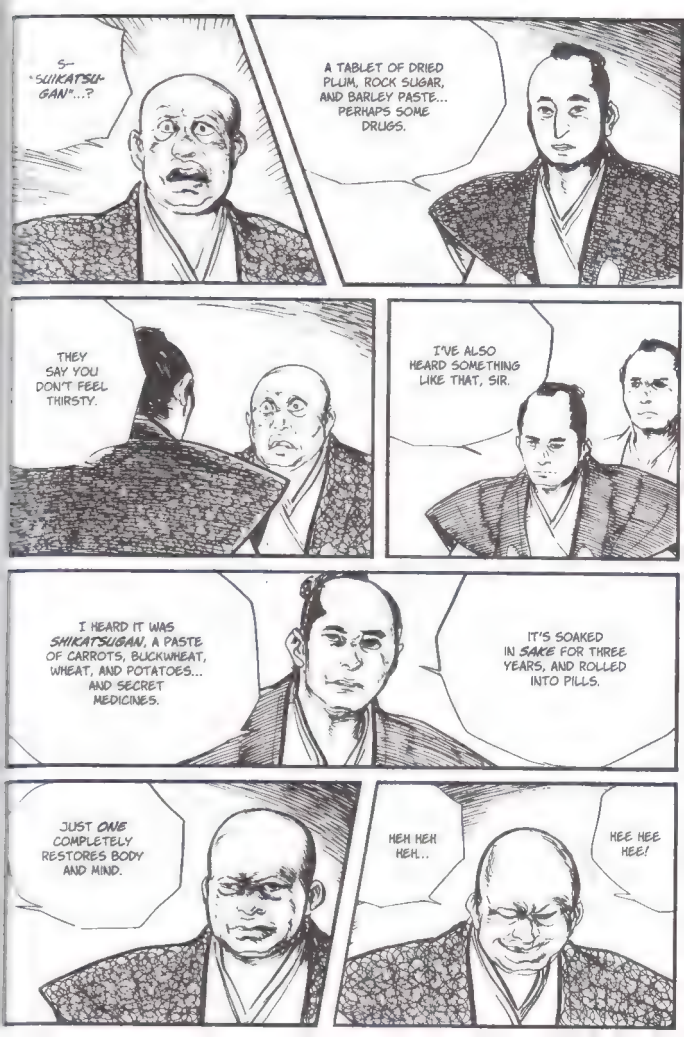

FWMP
AHH... TIRED.
MORE THAN HE IS.
YOU RELAX, TOO!
THINK ABOUT HOW HE DOES IT!
GO-SHIHAI.
WHA—

-AGYŪ-
SAMA...
...MAY HAVE NINJA TRAINING
NINJA...?!
THAT'S IT! NINJA!
OF COURSE! HE'S A NINJA!
...HE RUNS THE YAGYŪ SHINOBI! HE'S A JŌJIN!
...?!
BUT... SO WHAT?
SIR...

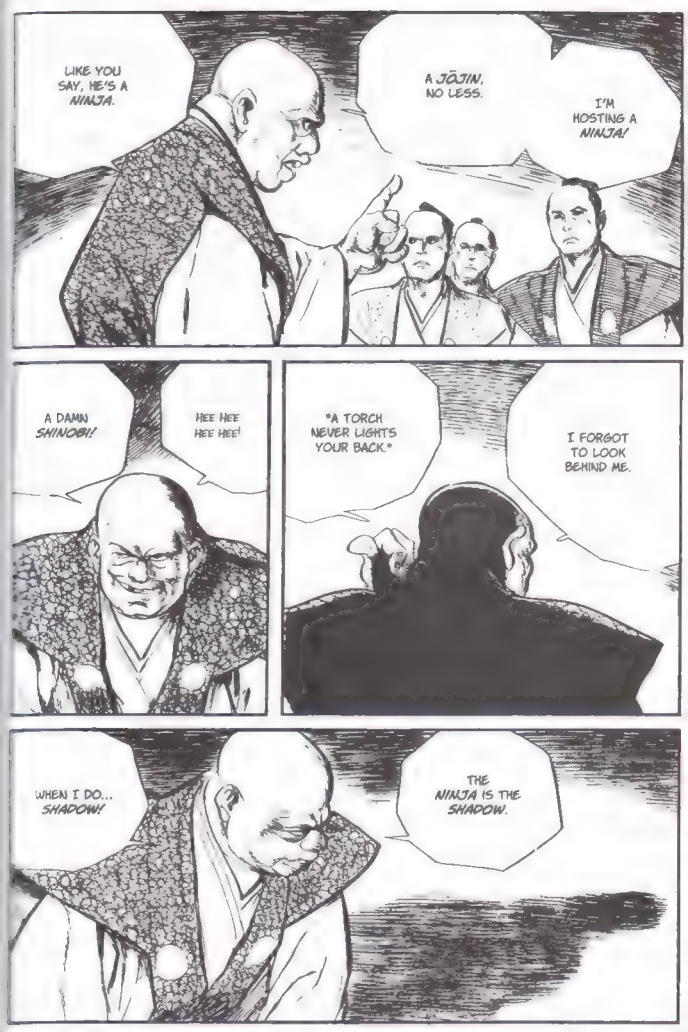
THEN... HE'S STRONGER THAN NORMAL MEN.
OF COURSE HE IS! BUT EVEN NINJA CAN'T GO THREE DAYS!
THAT'S WHY I WAITED SO LONG, IDIOT!
SIR...I HEAR NINJA CAN SLEEP SITTING UP.
WH... WHAT?!

"RUE...?
YES, SIR. *STRAIGHT UP, TOES SPREAD, NOT MOVING.*
WHY THE TOES?
SIR, THE SKIN BETWEEN THE TOES IS SENSITIVE. IT'S SO THEY CAN DETECT APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.
HUH... MAKES SENSE.
LET'S SEE...
GUESS MY KNEE'S HEALED.

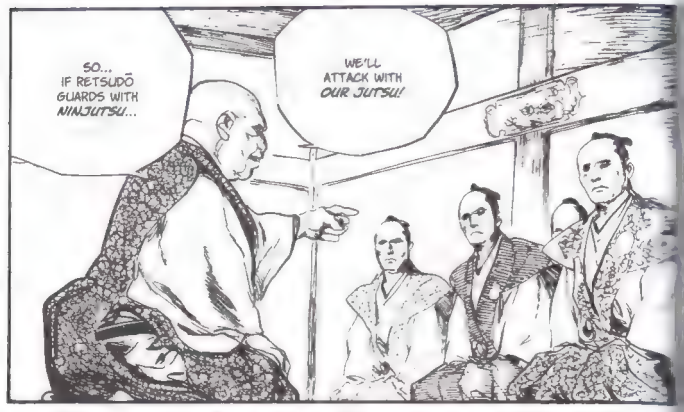

HRM... HRM!
SPREADING YOUR TOES...
...IS QUITE...
...THE... CHALLENGE.
HMM.
BUT ODDLY... SOOTHING.
YET EVEN IF RETSUDŌ AND HIS TOES SIT LIKE THIS, HE STILL NEEDS FOOD AND WATER!
RUMOR IS THAT THEY HAVE SPECIAL *RATIONS*, SIR— *SUIKATSUGAN*.


S—
"SHIKATSU-
GAN"...?
A TABLET OF DRIED PLUM, ROCK SUGAR, AND BARLEY PASTE... PERHAPS SOME DRUGS.
THEY SAY YOU DON'T FEEL THIRSTY.
I'VE ALSO HEARD SOMETHING LIKE THAT, SIR.
I HEARD IT WAS *SHIKATSUGAN*, A PASTE OF CARROTS, BUCKWHEAT, WHEAT, AND POTATOES... AND SECRET MEDICINES.
IT'S SOAKED IN *SAKE* FOR THREE YEARS, AND ROLLED INTO PILLS.
JUST *ONE* COMPLETELY RESTORES BODY AND MIND.
HEH HEH HEH...
HEE HEE HEE!

WHEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
BWEE
HEE
HEE!
HEE
HEE
HEE
HAW!
THAT'S MY HAIKAN-SHŪ. WELL SPOKEN!


LIKE YOU SAY, HE'S A NINJA.
A JŌJIN, NO LESS.
I'M HOSTING A NINJA!
A DAMN SHINOBI!
HEE HEE HEE HEE!
"A TORCH NEVER LIGHTS YOUR BACK."
I FORGOT TO LOOK BEHIND ME.
WHEN I DO... SHADOW!
THE NINJA IS THE SHADOW.

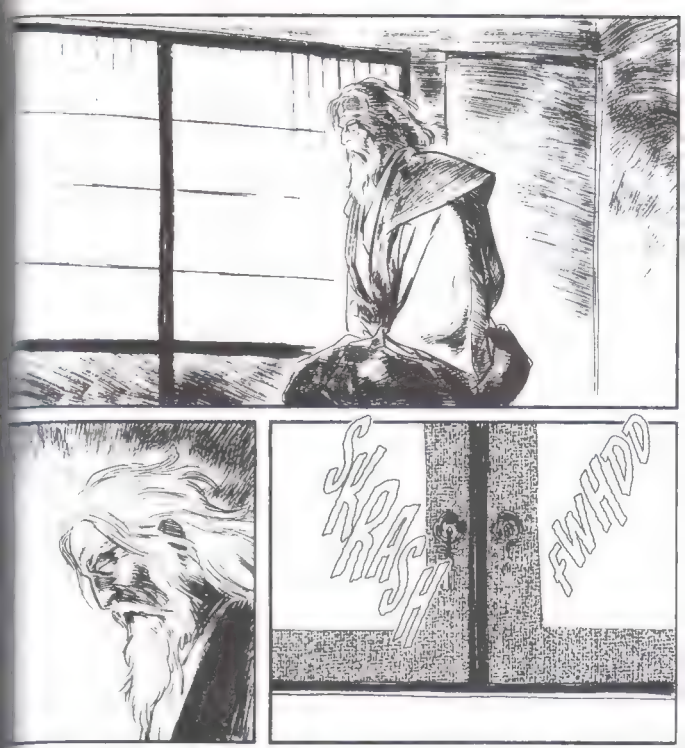
YEE HEE HEE HEE!
I'LL SMASH YOUR SHADOW WITH THE LIGHT!
TEND A NINJA LIKE A NINJA.

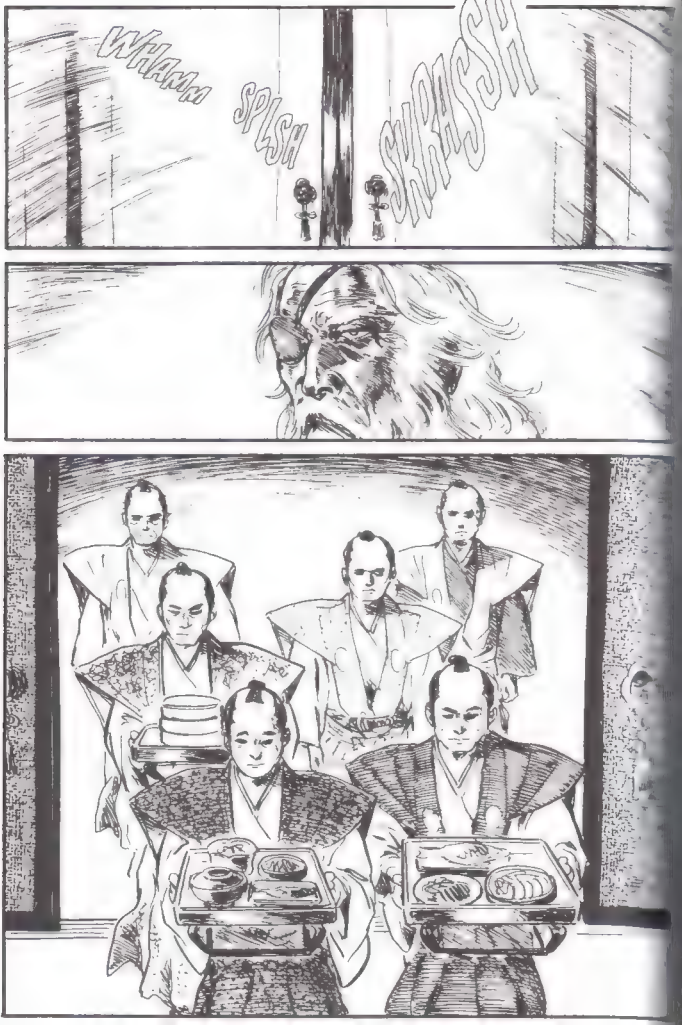

SO... IF RETSUDŌ GUARDS WITH NINJUTSU...
WE'LL ATTACK WITH OUR JUTSU!

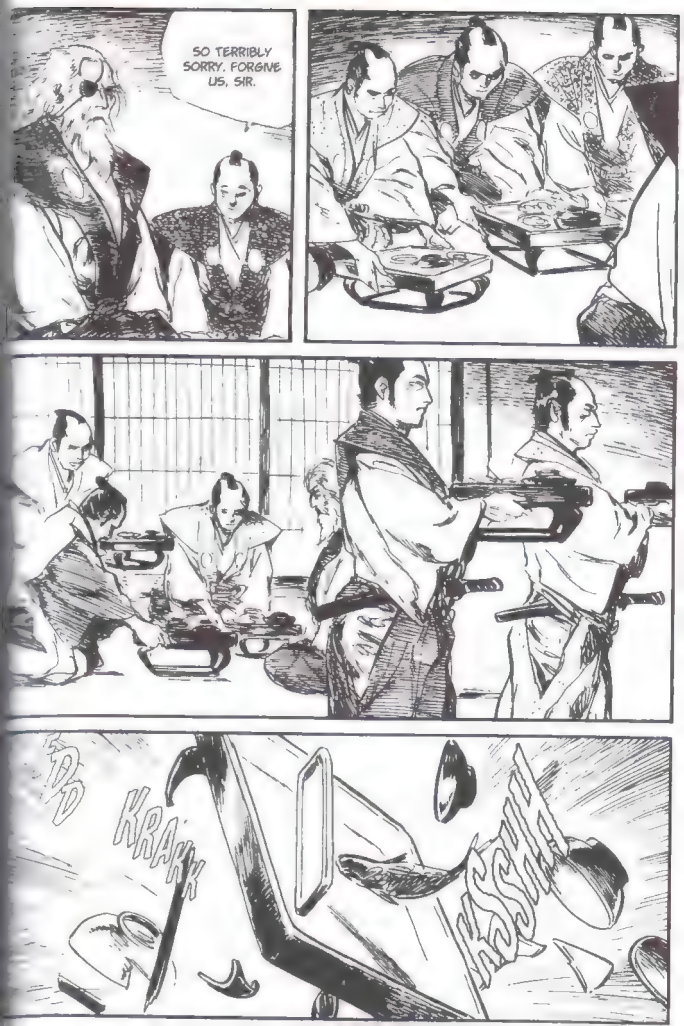
AND WHAT IS THE JUTSU OF THE HAIZEN-SHŪ...?
LUNCH AFTER TEA! SNACK AFTER LUNCH! DESERT AFTER DINNER!

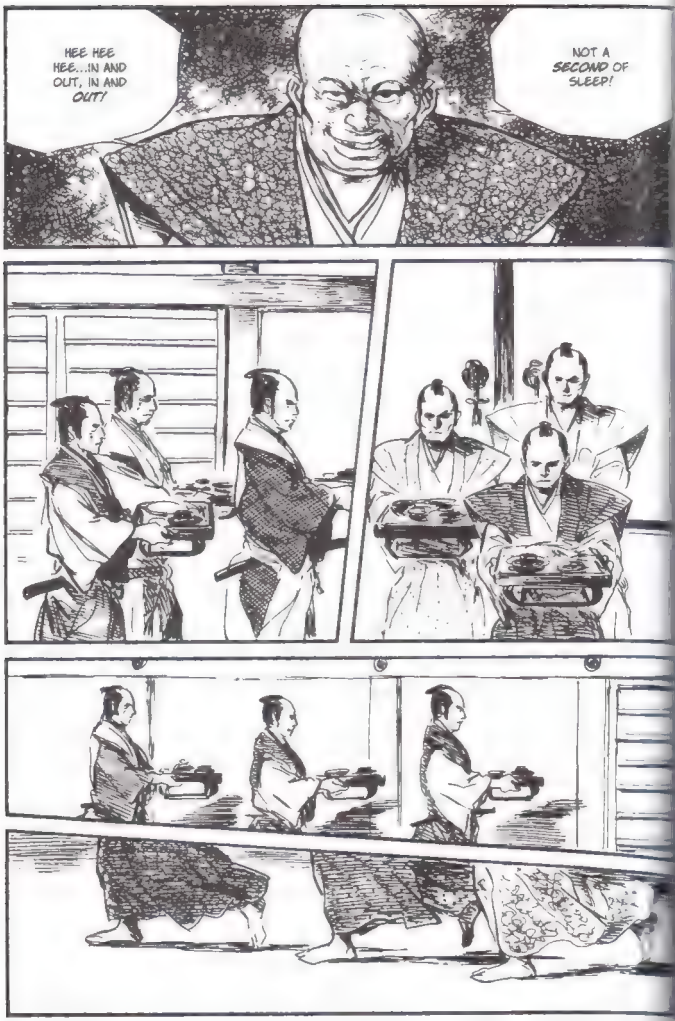
SERVE HIM FOOD AND DRINK NON-STOP! MAKE IT LOUD!
NOISY! ABRASIVE!
POUND THE TATAMI! LET HIS TOES FEEL THAT!
SERVE TEA BEFORE BREAKFAST! BRUNCH BEFORE LUNCH!
APPETIZERS BEFORE DINNER!
DESSERT! MIDNIGHT SNACK!
YES, SIR!

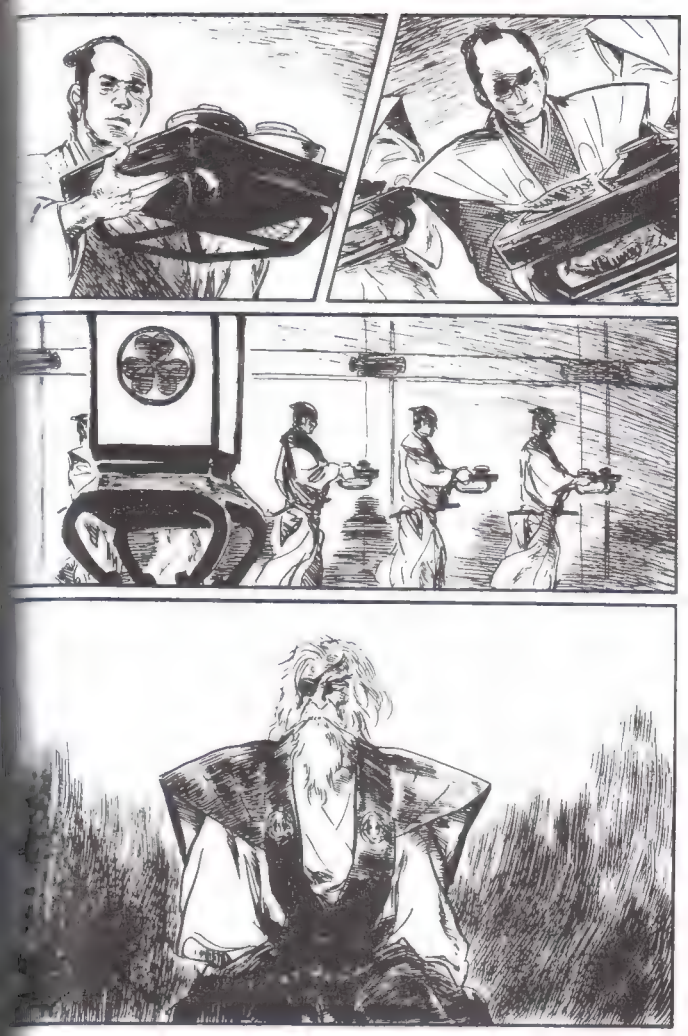
NEXT... HOW TO GET HIS HIDDEN *RATIONS*...
THAT'S IT!
THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW OUR LORD VISITS TŌSHŌGŪ SHRINE. THEY'LL PURIFY THE CASTLE— *EVERYONE* MUST HAVE A RITUAL BATH!
RETSUDŌ'S NO EXCEPTION! SEARCH HIS CLOTHES WHILE HE BATHES!
GO NOW!!

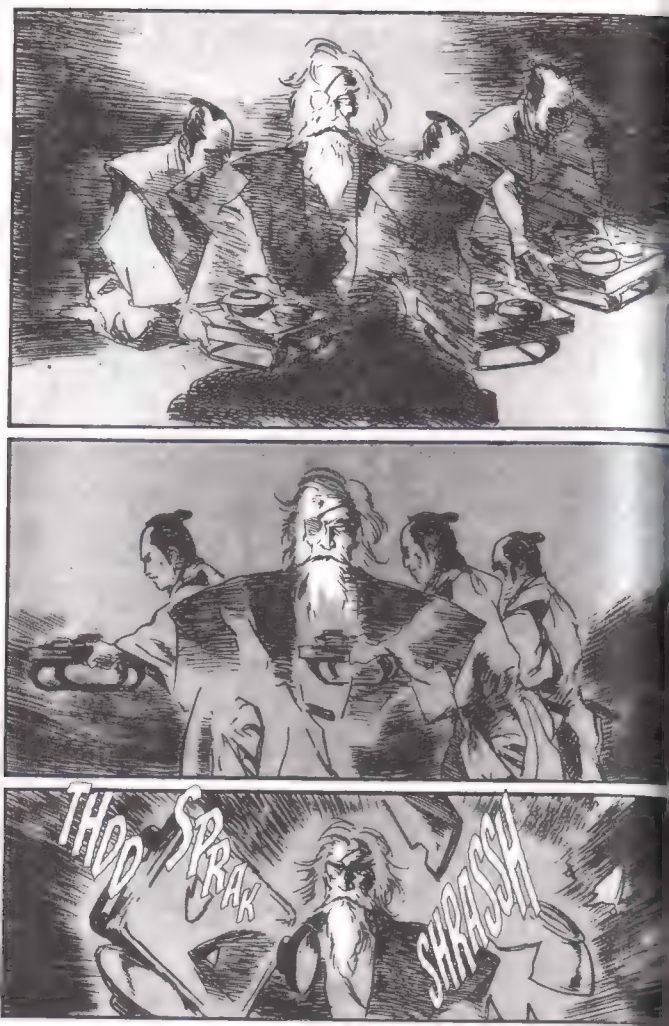

SKRASP
FWHDD
SHKK

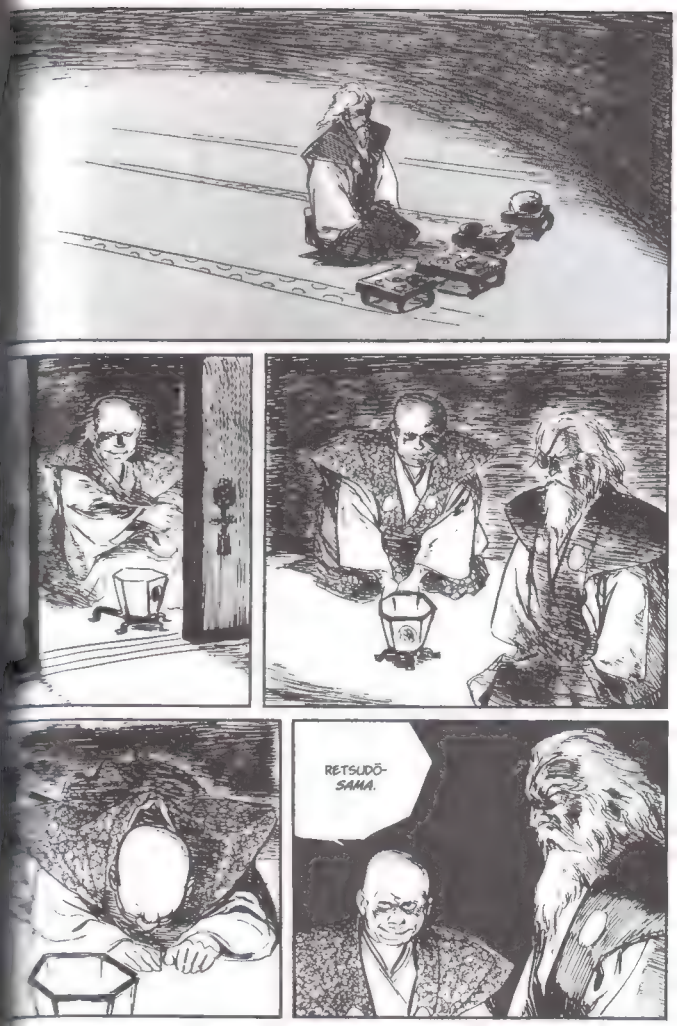

WHAMM
SPLSH
SPASH


SO TERRIBLY SORRY. FORGIVE US, SIR.
KRAK
KASHA


HEE HEE HEE...IN AND OUT, IN AND OUT!
NOT A SECOND OF SLEEP!



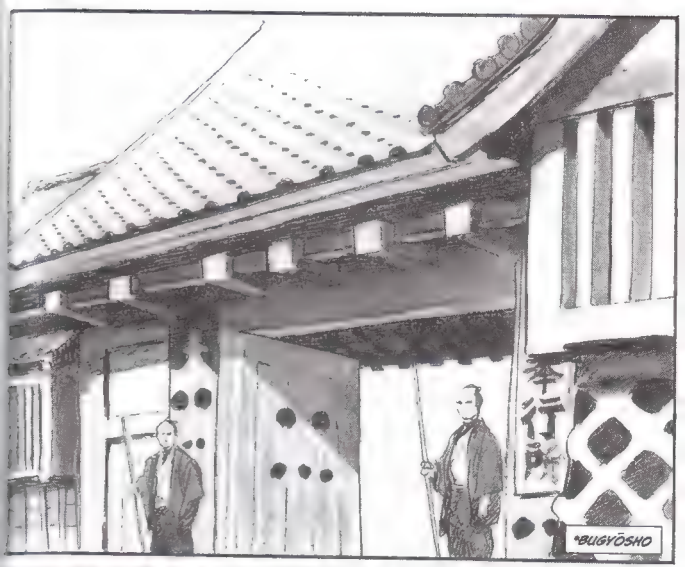

THUD
SPRAK
SHRASH


RETSUDŌ-
SAMA.

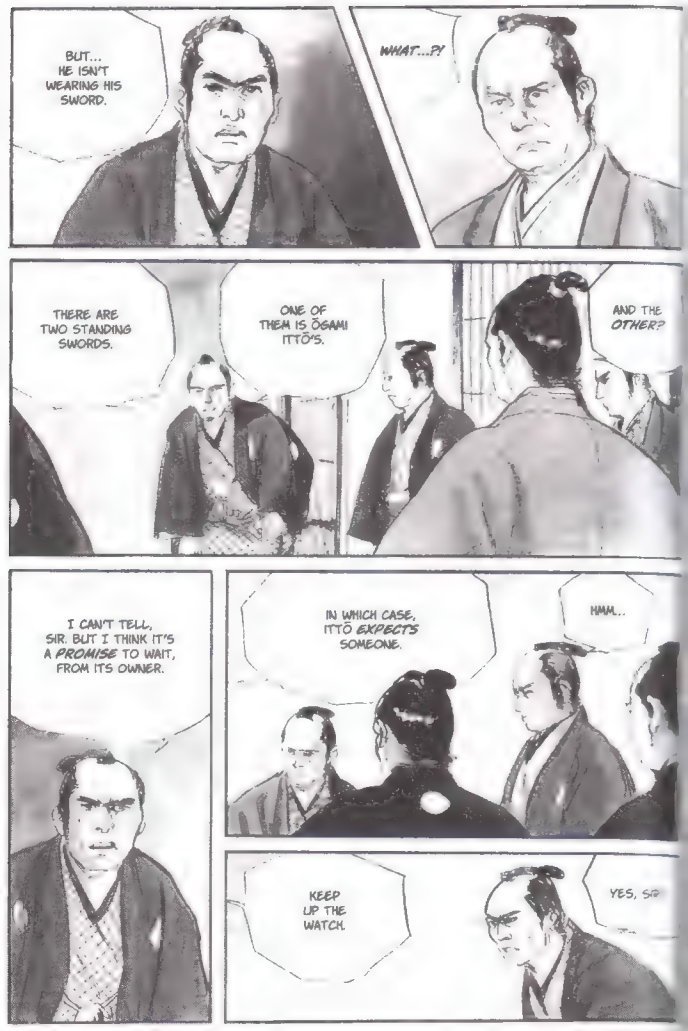
OUR LORD WILL BE VISITING TŌSHŌGŪ SHRINE SOON.
BE SURE TO *BATHE* TONIGHT. IT IS *REQUIRED!*
HEE HEE HEE HEE!
MY APOLOGIES! HEE HEE...

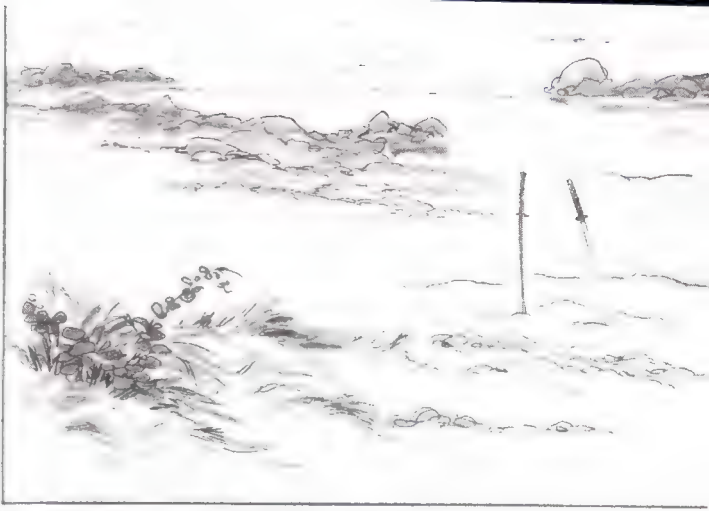
the hundred and twenty-seventh

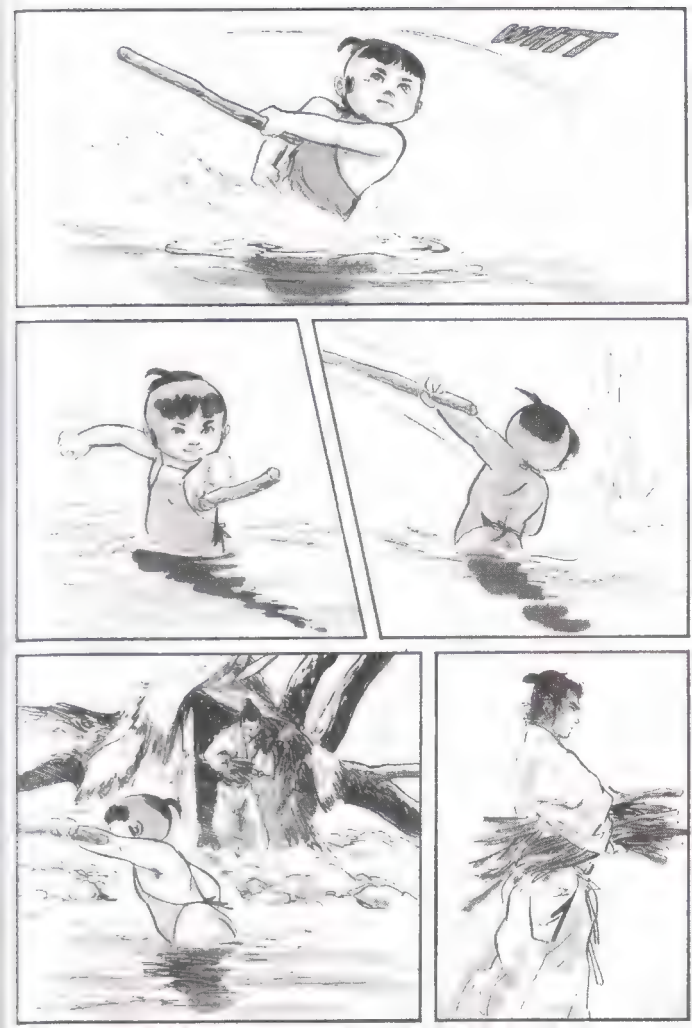
By His Own Hand


奉行所
*BUGYŌSHO

HE BUILT A HUT BY THE HATCHŌ. HE'S STAYING.


BUT... HE ISN'T WEARING HIS SWORD.
WHAT...?!
THERE ARE TWO STANDING SWORDS.
ONE OF THEM IS ŌSAMI ITTŌ'S.
AND THE *OTHER?*
I CAN'T TELL, SIR. BUT I THINK IT'S A *PROMISE* TO WAIT, FROM ITS OWNER.
IN WHICH CASE, ITTŌ *EXPECTS* SOMEONE.
HMM...
KEEP UP THE WATCH.
YES, SIR

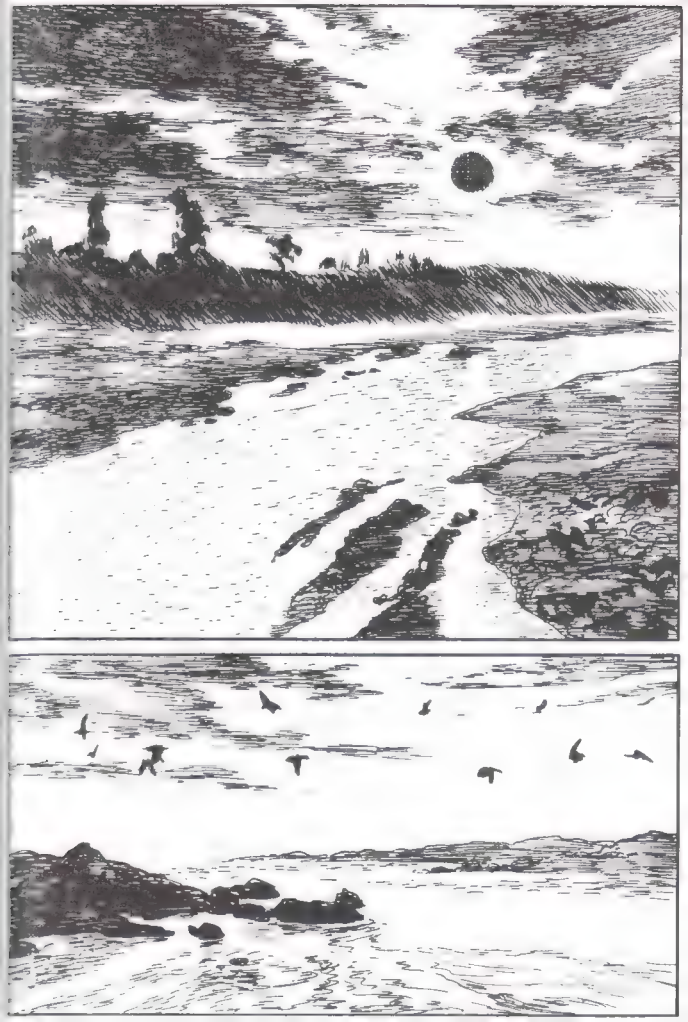



WHITT

FWAK
FWAK
TWAK
FWAK

SLSH
SLSH
SLSH
SLSH

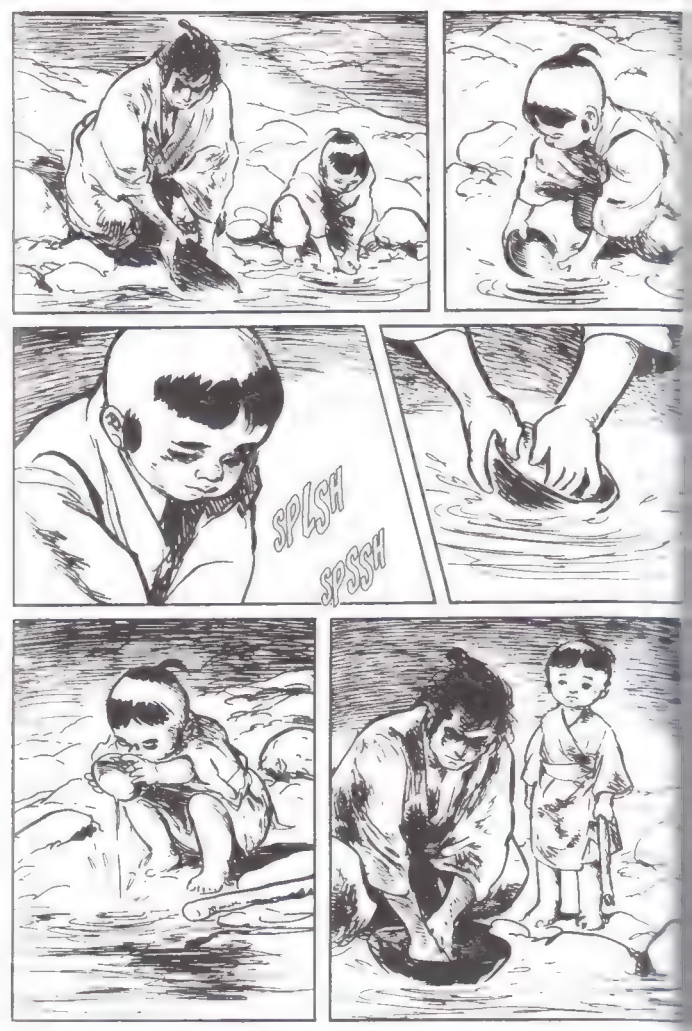
SHISH
SHISH
WHIRR
WHIRR

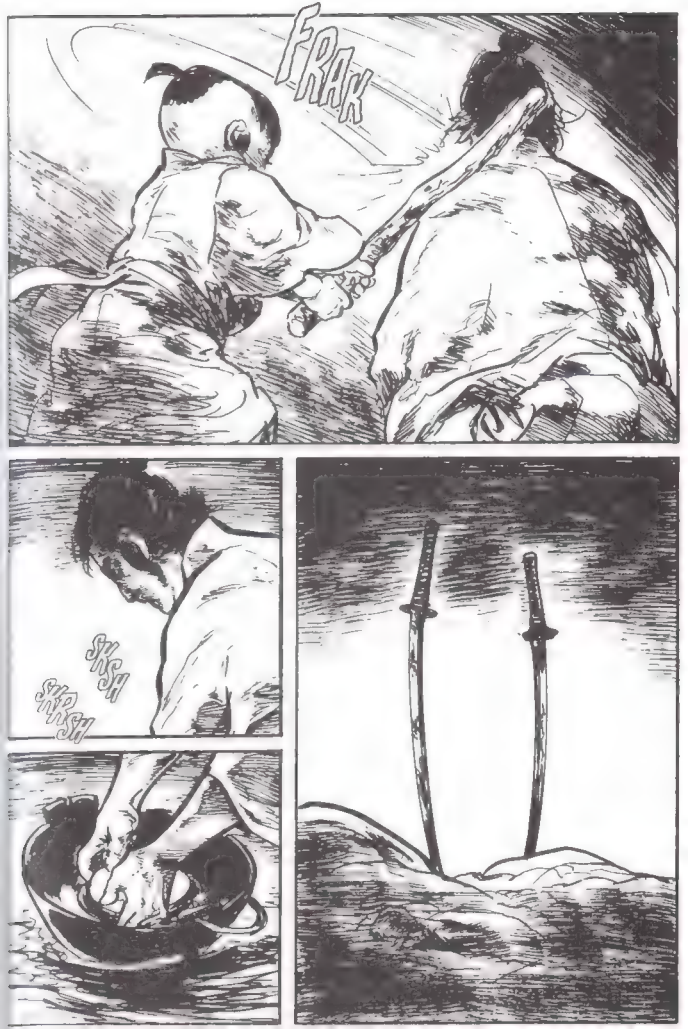


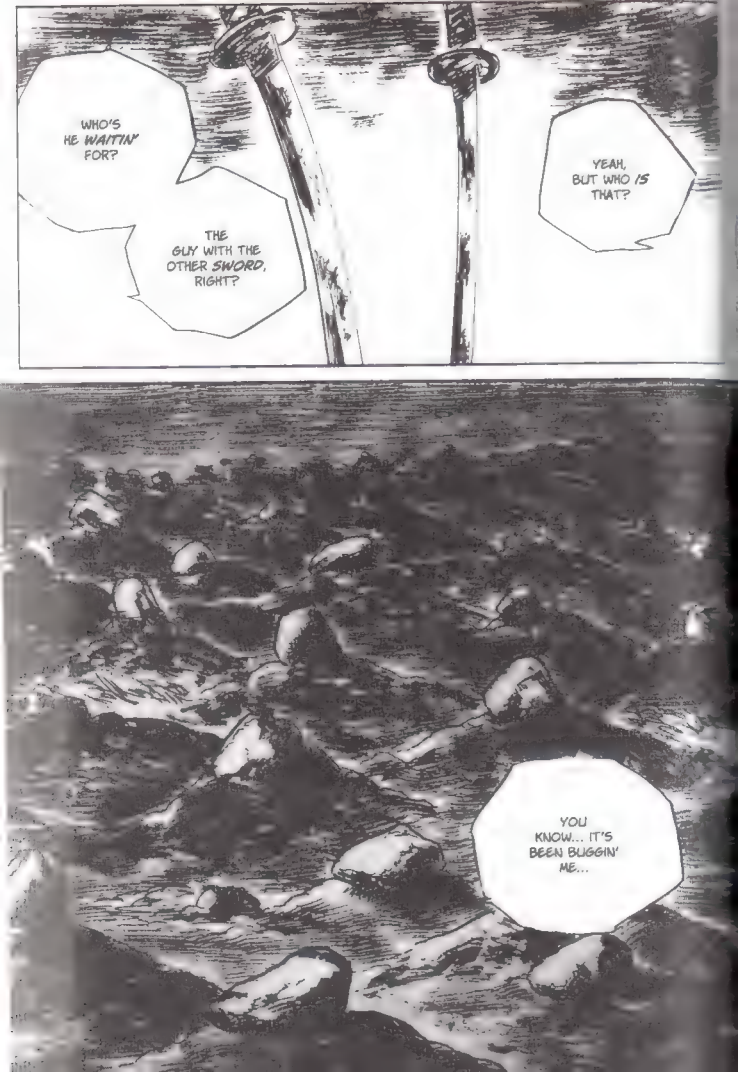
FWAK

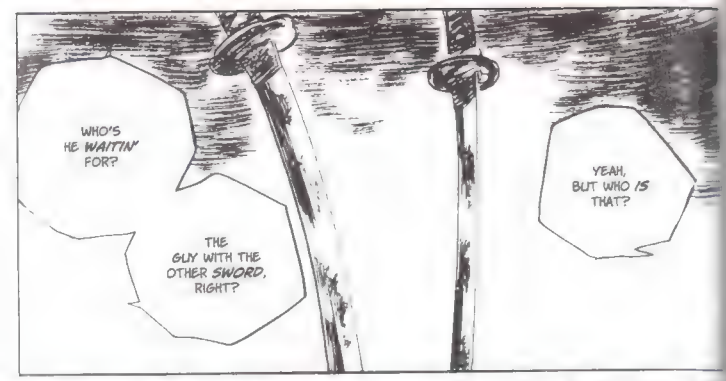
WHAT'S GOIN' ON, BOSS?
THE KID'S KEEPS WHACKING HIM. IS HE TEACHING HIM KENDÔ, MAYBE?

YOU CALL THAT *TEACHING*? HE JUST *IGNORES* 'IM!
YEAH... BUT HE DON'T LOOK ANGRY AT THE KID.
SO WHAT *ELSE* COULD IT BE?
YEAH... MAYBE.
HE MUST BE TEACHING *SOMETHING*.


SPLSH
SPSSH


FRAK
SHSH
SHSH


WHO'S HE *WAITIN'* FOR?
THE GUY WITH THE OTHER *SWORD*, RIGHT?
YEAH, BUT WHO *IS* THAT?
YOU KNOW... IT'S BEEN BUGGIN' ME...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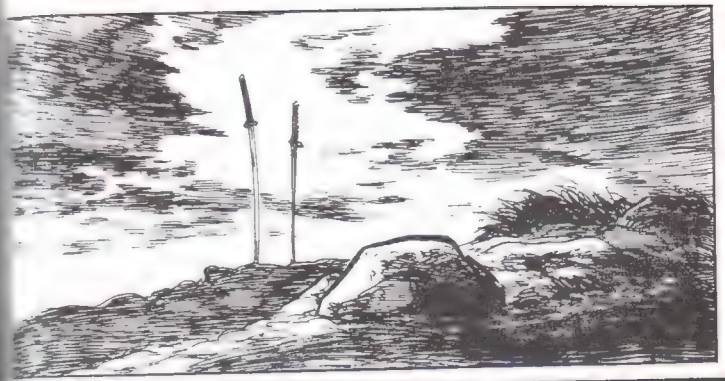
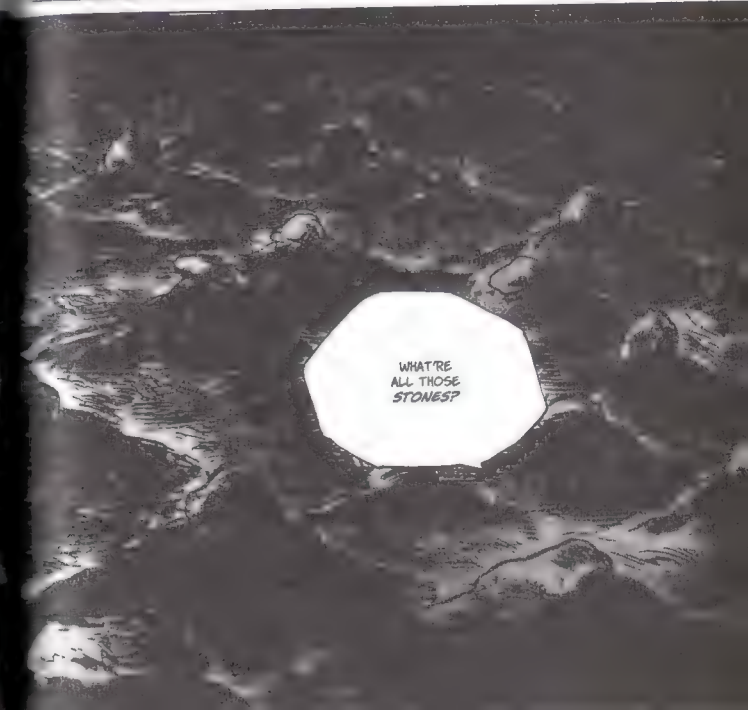
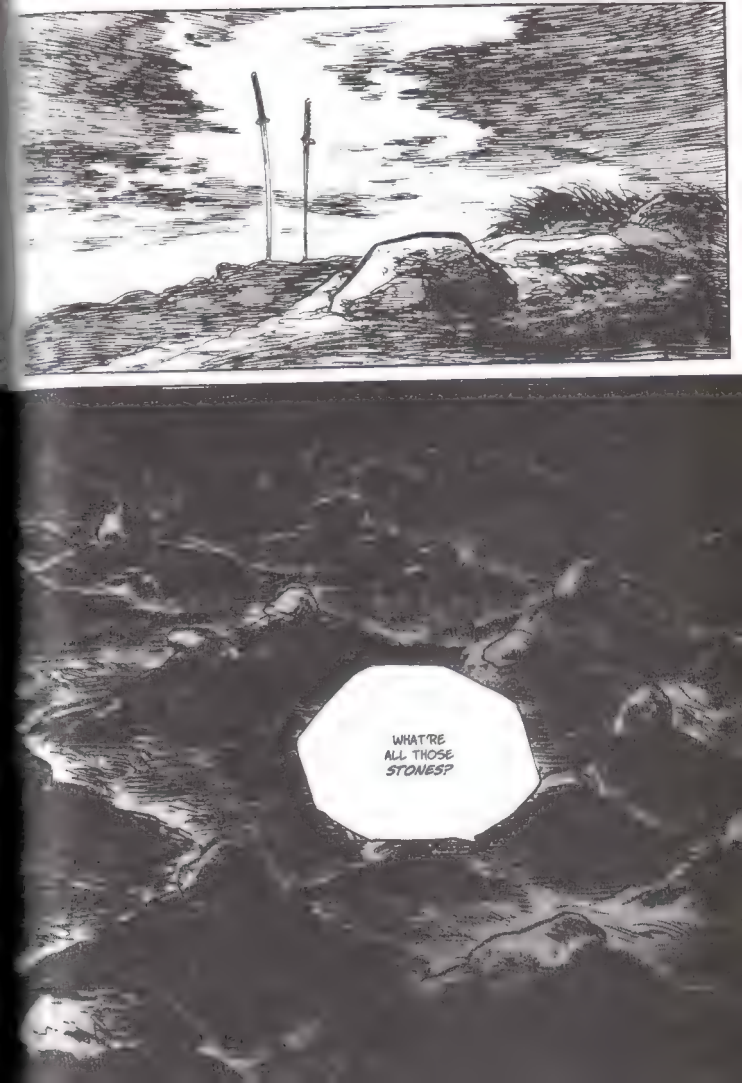


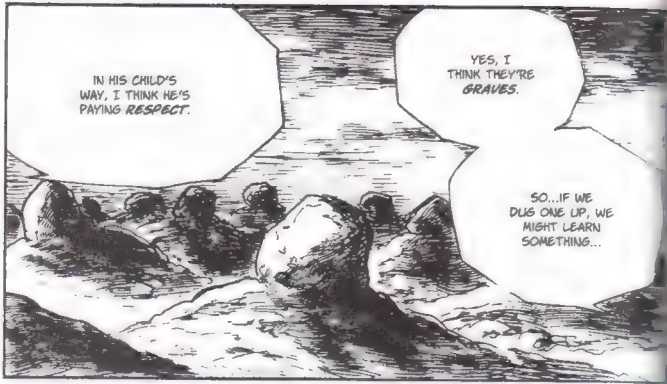
YOU KNOW... IT'S BEEN BUGGIN' ME...


WHAT'RE ALL THOSE *STONES?*

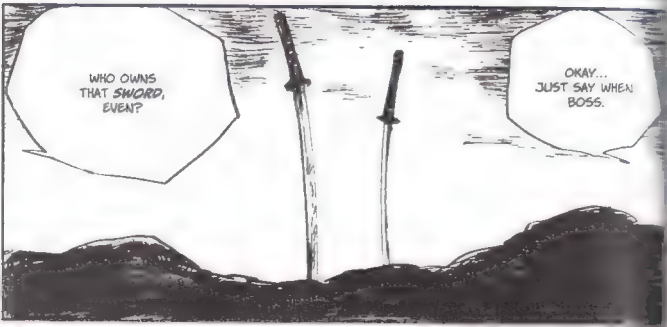

WHAT'RE ALL THOSE STONES?

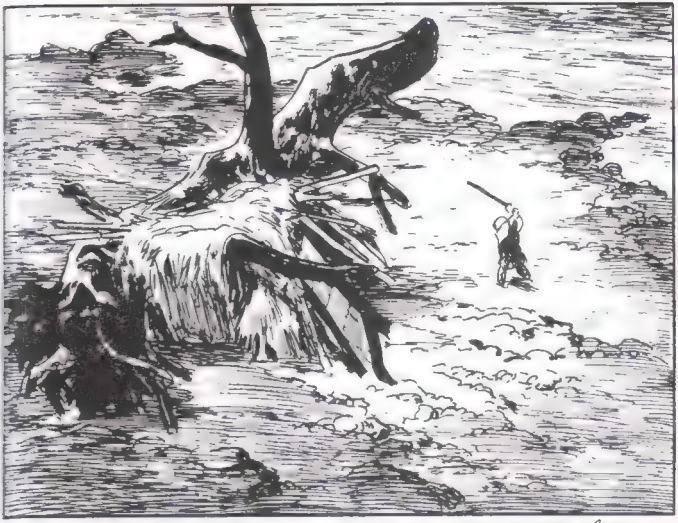
YEAH, I'VE BEEN WONDERIN', TOO...
STRANGE, INDEED THEY REMIND ME OF... GRAVES.
HUH? G-GRAVES?!
IF THOSE'RE GRAVES, THERE'S DEAD FOLK UNDER 'EM, A HUNDRED AT LEAST!

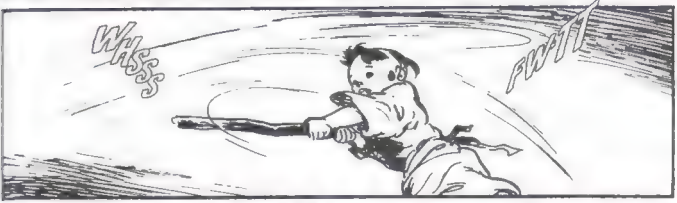
I'VE NOTICED AN ODD THING—
—THE BOY AVOIDS THEM WHEN HE PLAYS. EVEN WHEN HE DOES HIS BUSINESS...
NOW THAT YOU SAY SO... YEAH.
...HE WON'T POINT IN THEIR DIRECTION. WHEN HE NAPS, HE TURNS HIS FEET AWAY.

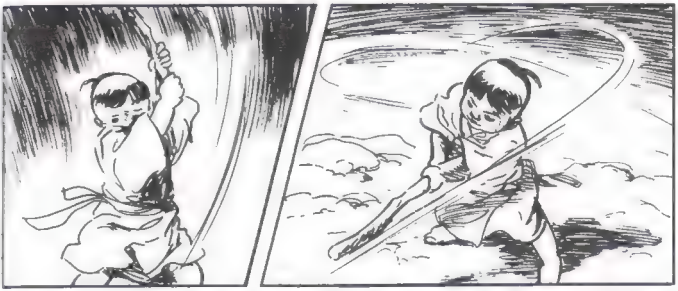

IN HIS CHILD'S WAY, I THINK HE'S PAYING *RESPECT*.
YES, I THINK THEY'RE *GRAVES*.
SO...IF WE DUG ONE UP, WE MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING...

LIKE... WHO HE'S WAITIN' FOR?

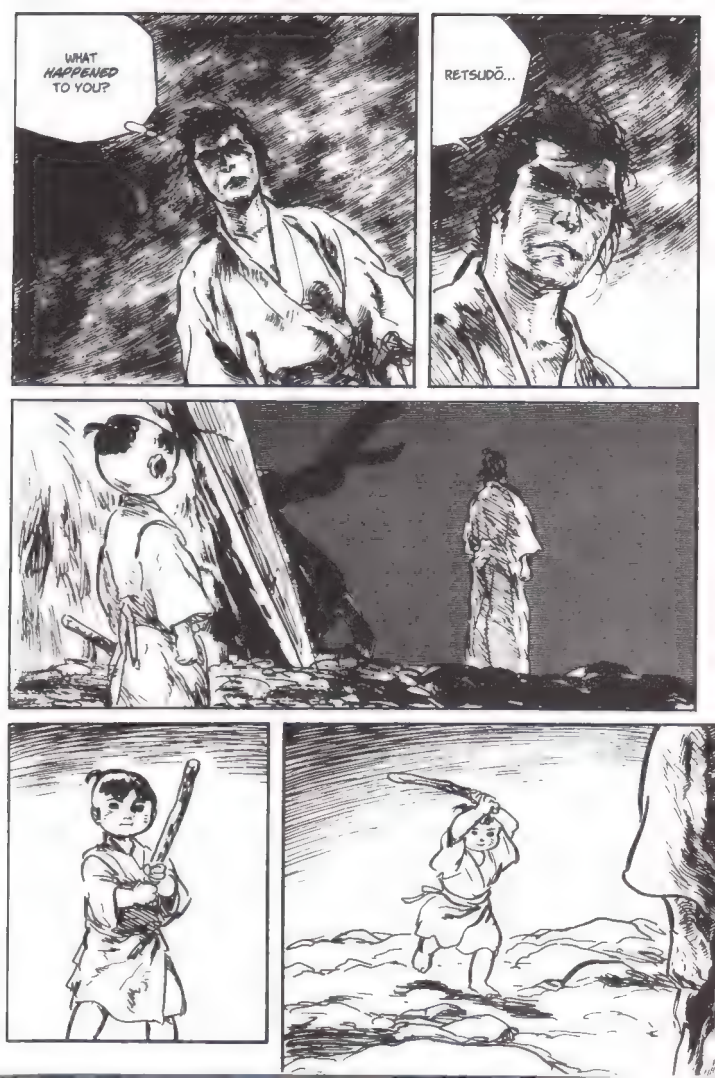

WHO OWNS THAT *SWORD*, EVEN?
OKAY... JUST SAY WHEN, BOSS.

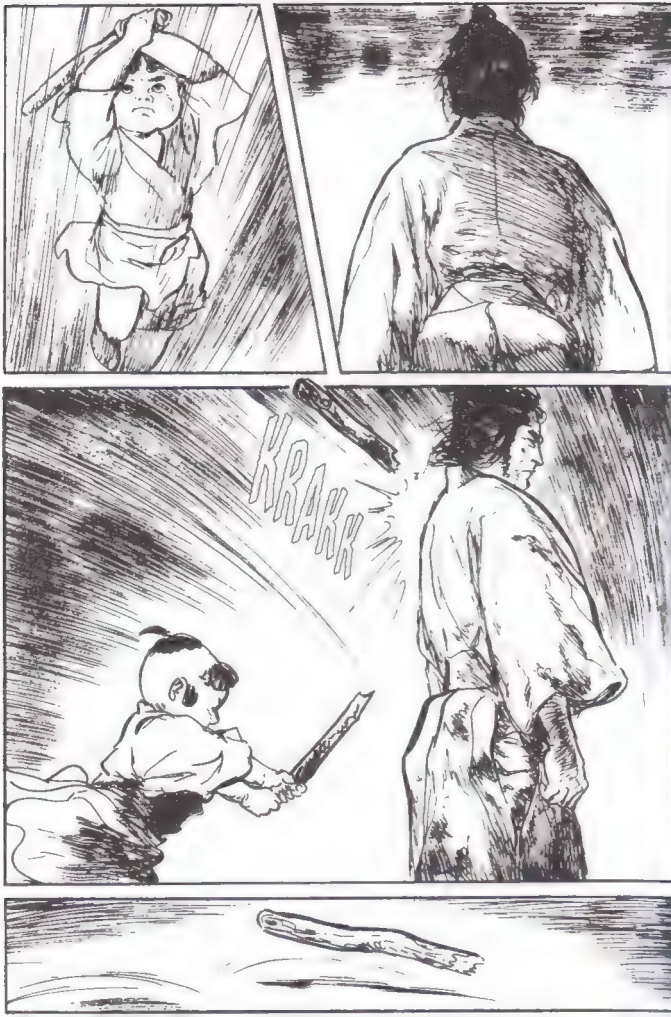



WHSS
FWIT



RETSUDŌ IN TROUBLE...
...AND THE GRASS CALLED TO EDO. FOR WHAT?


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
RETSUDŌ...


KRAKK

WHSSH
FWSSJ
WHSSH

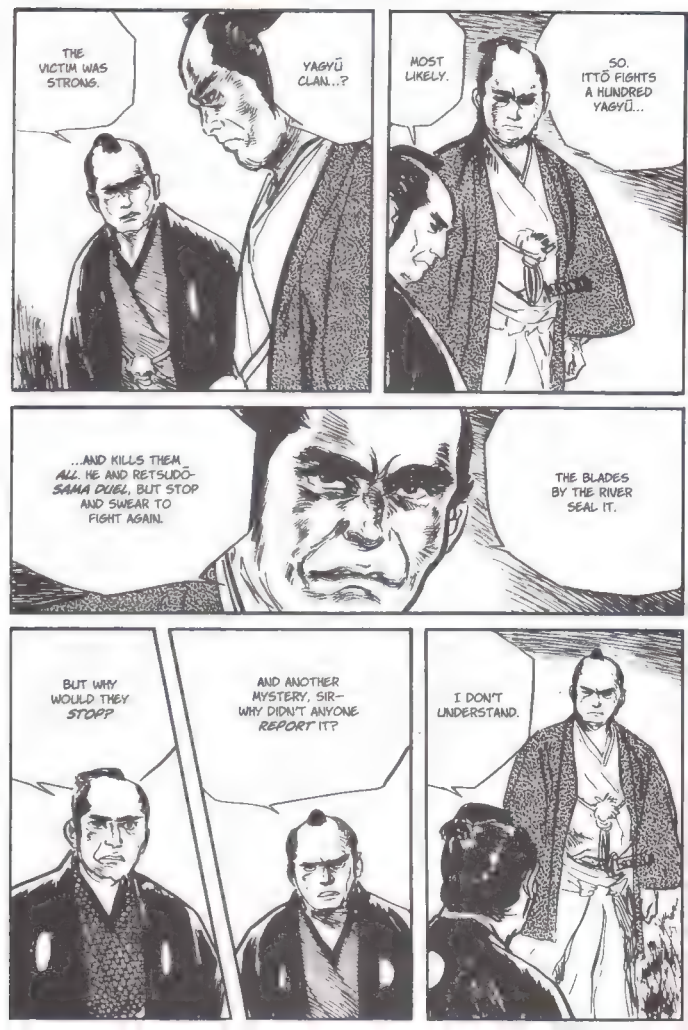
HE SOAKED IT...
AND IT'S LONGER'N THE LAST ONE. THICKER, TOO.
BUT WHY... WATER?
TO MAKE IT HEAVIER... STRONGER...?

MACHIKATA
...?

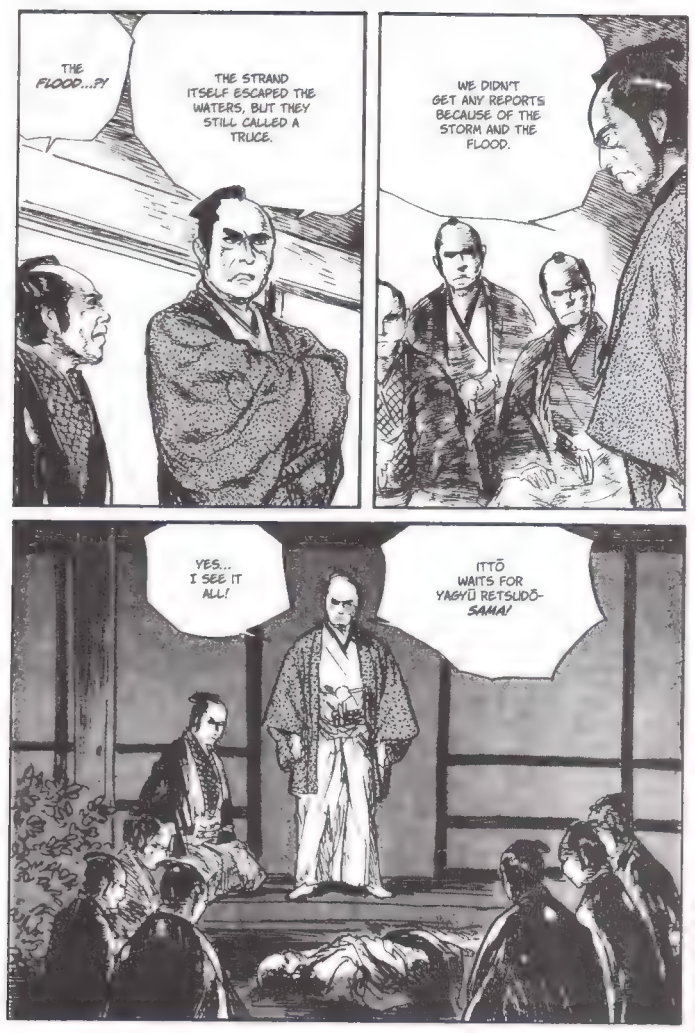
CHUKK
SHUKK
CHUKK
SHUKK

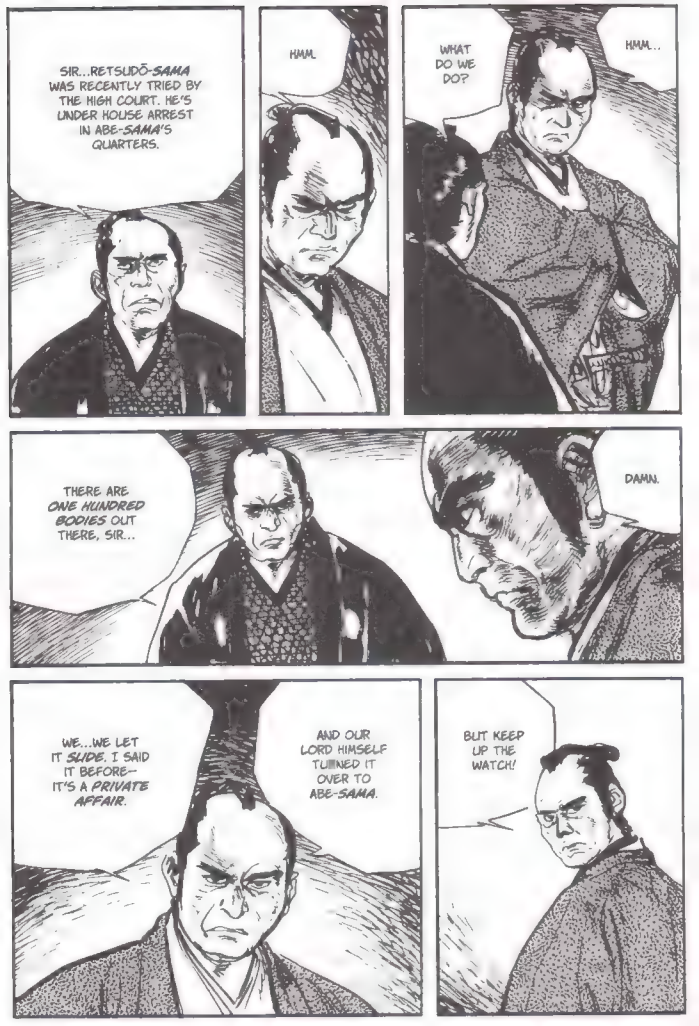
*BUGYŌSHO
WHAT?!
A HUNDRED CORPSES?! BY THE HATCHŌ?!
WE EXHUMED ONE, SIR.

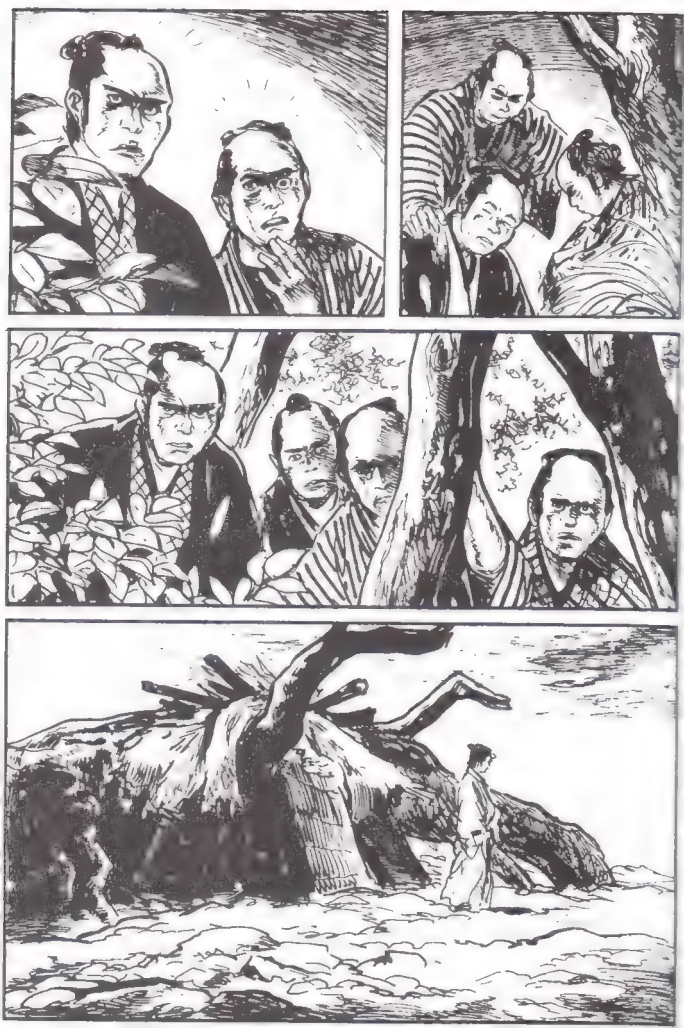
IT'S A REVERSE LONG SWORD STROKE... THE WORK OF A MASTER. ŌGAMI ITTŌ, I PRESUME.
HMM... . . . .

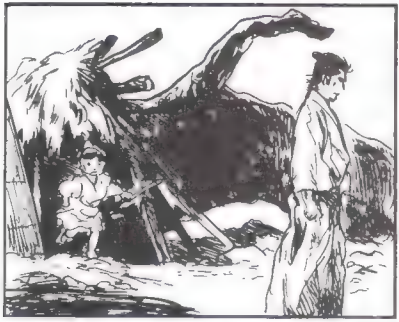

THE VICTIM WAS STRONG.
YAGYŪ CLAN...?
MOST LIKELY.
SO. ITTŌ FIGHTS A HUNDRED YAGYŪ...
...AND KILLS THEM ALL. HE AND RETSUDŌ-SAMA DUEL, BUT STOP AND SWEAR TO FIGHT AGAIN.
THE BLADES BY THE RIVER SEAL IT.
BUT WHY WOULD THEY STOP?
AND ANOTHER MYSTERY, SIR— WHY DIDN'T ANYONE REPORT IT?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

THE HATCHŌ STRAND'S A LONELY PLACE, BUT YOU'D HEAR THE SCREAMS AND SWORDS RIGHT ACROSS THE RIVER.
CONNECT THE DOTS, GET THE ANSWER.
FIRST, LOOK AT THE STATE OF THE CORPSE.


THE FLOOD...?!
THE STRAND ITSELF ESCAPED THE WATERS, BUT THEY STILL CALLED A TRUCE.
WE DIDN'T GET ANY REPORTS BECAUSE OF THE STORM AND THE FLOOD.
YES... I SEE IT ALL!
ITTŌ WAITS FOR YAGYŪ RETSUDŌ-SAMA!


SIR...RETSUDŌ-SAMA WAS RECENTLY TRIED BY THE HIGH COURT. HE'S UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN ABE-SAMA'S QUARTERS.
HMM.
WHAT DO WE DO?
HMM...
THERE ARE ONE HUNDRED BODIES OUT THERE, SIR...
DAMN.
WE...WE LET IT SLIDE. I SAID IT BEFORE— IT'S A PRIVATE AFFAIR.
AND OUR LORD HIMSELF TURNED IT OVER TO ABE-SAMA.
BUT KEEP UP THE WATCH!





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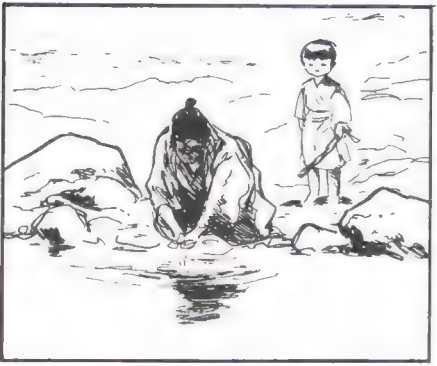

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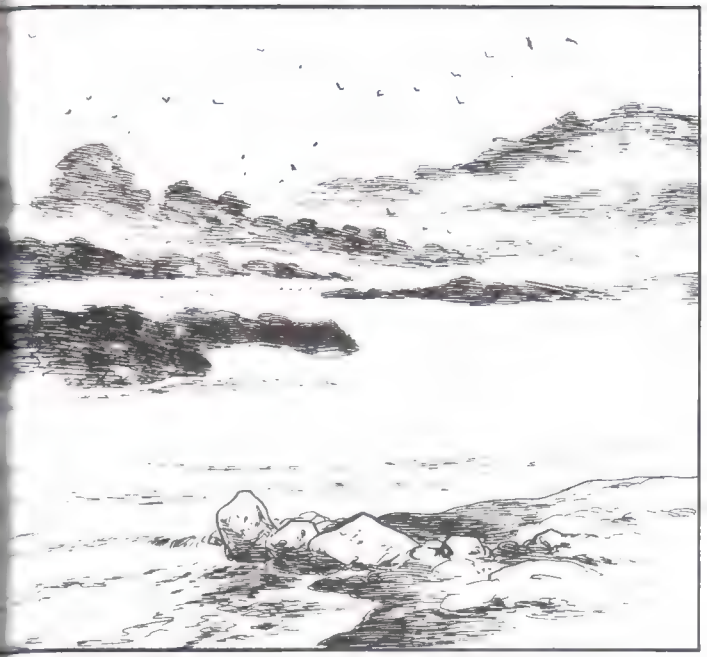

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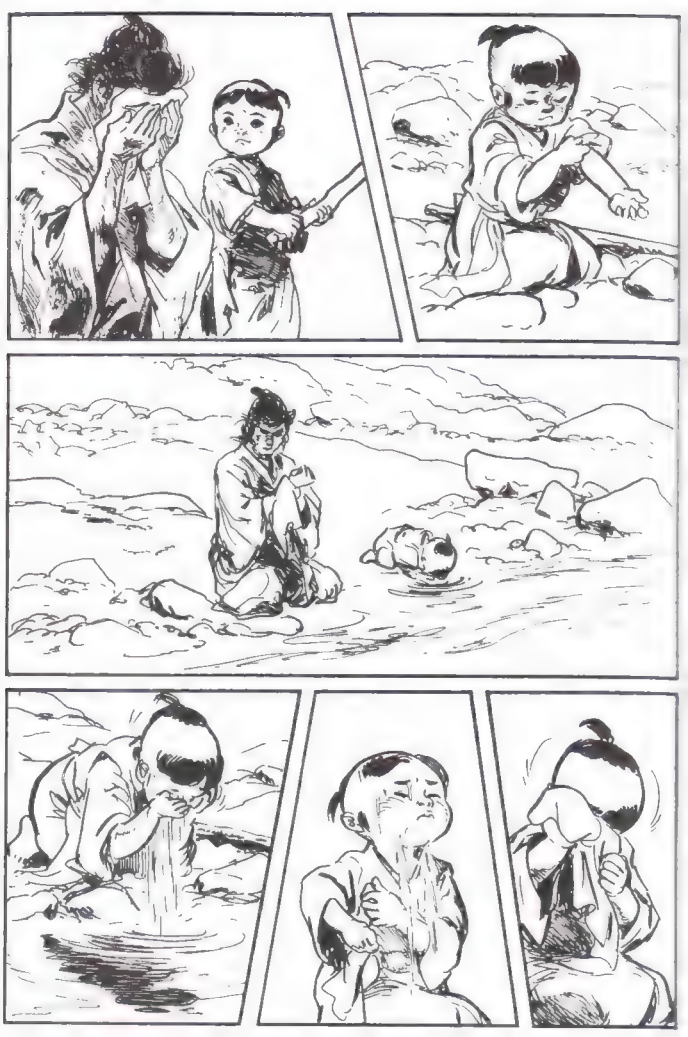

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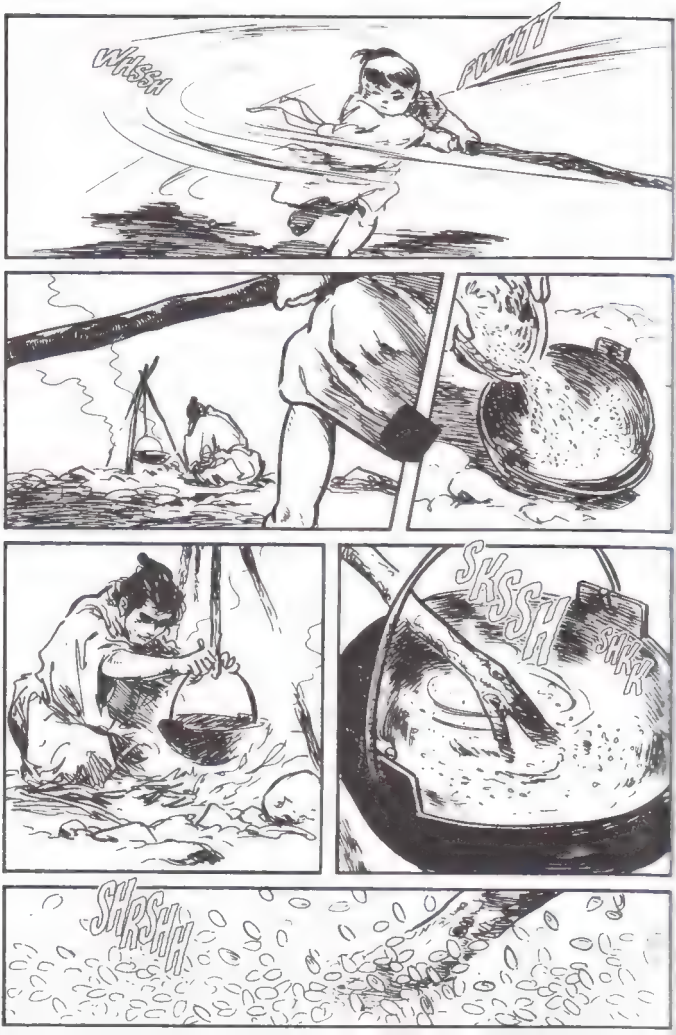
WHOOSH
FWHIT
SKSSSH
SHPSHH

KRAK
FWIP

KTAK
SMAK

FWAK
WHOO

TO HAVE AND TO *HOLD*.
A PEASANT, HIS HOE... A MERCHANT, HIS SCALES...
...A *BUSHI*, HIS *SWORD*.
AT HIS SIDE ALWAYS, WEIGHTLESS, READY

WE EARN THE *RIGHT* TO HOLD.
BUT A *SAMURAI MUST* HOLD HIS SWORD.
DAIGORO... YOU'RE FINALLY *HOLDING* YOUR STICK.
DO YOU SEE?
UH!
COME.

THEY WEIGH THE SAME AS YOUR STICK.
YOU'VE EARNED THE RIGHT TO HOLD THEM.
TO *HOLD*. NOT TO USE.
TOMORROW YOU'LL DEFEND THIS SPOT— PLEDGED BY TWO *SAMURAI*— TO THE *DEATH*.

NONE CAN TELL THE FUTURE. BUT IF DISASTER STRIKES, TAKE THEM TO SAFETY. RETURN THEM WHEN IT'S OVER.
IF SOMEONE TRIES TO TAKE THEM, YOU TAKE THEM FIRST.
YES...?
GIVE THEM TO NO ONE.

HERE— THIS RICE WILL LAST TEN DAYS.
TOMORROW'S THE *HIE SANNŌ-SHA* FESTIVAL. IT'S THE GREATEST OF ALL OBSERVED BY THE *SHŌGUN* FAMILY. THE PARADE ENTERS EDO CASTLE.
I WILL GO IN WITH THEM.
I NEED TO FIND YAGYŪ RETSUDŌ. IF HE'S ALIVE, I'LL BRING HIM OUT.
SEVEN DAYS SINCE OUR PLEDGE.
SEVEN DAYS SINCE HE SAID HE'D HONOR IT IN DEATH.
IT WAS WARRIOR ETIQUETTE TO TELL US, AND WE COULD SIMPLY SIT AND WAIT. YET ONE HONOR DEMANDS ANOTHER, EVEN IF HE IS OUR MORTAL ENEMY.

YOUR FATHER MUST GO.
ARE YOU *READY*, DAIGORO?

GLOSSARY

bugyo
A position combining the post of mayor and chief of police for a town, in charge of administration, maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law. Rule was extended only to commoners.

bugyosho
The office of the *bugyo*.

bushi
A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushū
Another term for Musashi, the area encompassing most of the Kantō Plain around modern-day Tokyo.

daimyō
A feudal lord.

Edo
Edo was a castle town, that rose up around the moats and ramparts of Edo castle, the stronghold of the Tokugawa clan. The central core of the city, administered by the *machi-bugyō* city commissioner, who reported directly to the shōgun's senior councilors, and was demarcated on official maps by a black line, the *kurobiki*, and was called the *go-funai*.

Fudai daimyō
The inner circle of clans pledging allegiance to the Tokugawa. The *fudai* clans were Tokugawa allies even before Tokugawa Ieyasu's decisive victory of Sekigahara that launched the Tokugawa shogunate.

funai
The central core of Edo (see Edo).

go-yō
Official business. As a lantern carried by the officers of the *daikan* magistrate, the equivalent of today's national police, or as the shout of the

police apprehending a criminal, *"go-yō"* was one of the most dreaded words in the world of Edo Japan's criminal elements.

haizen-shū
Servers for high officials.

han
A feudal domain.

hanshi
Samurai in the service of a *han*.

Hatchiman
A widely worshipped folk deity of war.

honorifics
Japan is a class and status society, and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes o and go, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Lone Wolf and Cub*:

dono – archaic; used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures.
san – the most common, used among equals or near-equals.
sama – used for superiors.
sensei – used for teachers, masters, respected entertainers, and politicians.

jisha bugyō
Magistrate in charge of religious affairs.

jōjin
A ninja leader.

jutsu
A martial arts skill, especially the techniques of the ninja.

kamishimo
Ceremonial outer garments.

kan
6 *shaku*, approximately 1.8 meters.

Kannon
Buddhist goddess of mercy.

kendo
The Japanese art of fencing with bamboo sticks.

koku
A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a *han's* wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.

machikata
Town policemen.

measurements

bu – approximately 3 millimeters.

sun – approximately 3 centimeters.

shaku – ten *sun*, approximately 30 centimeters.

ri – approximately 4 kilometers (2.5 miles).

metsuke

Inspector. A post combining the functions of chief of police and chief intelligence officer.

namu

From the Sanskrit *namas*: "take refuge in the Buddha." A common prayer for the dead.

noroshi

Emergency signals in times of crisis, either fires or fireworks-like flares.

shihai

Master.

shinobi

A generic term for ninja, meaning "one who moves in secrecy." Ninja had their heyday in the time of warring states before the rise of the Tokugawa clan. Originally mercenaries serving different warlords, by the Edo period they were in the service of the central government. The most famous *shinobi* were the ninja of Iga and Kaga, north of Kyoto. The Kurokuwa ninja that appear in *Lone Wolf and Cub* were officially the laborers and manual workers in Edo Castle. Whether they truly served as a secret spy corps is lost in history.

shisan

"Perhaps in death"
(see vol. 24)

tatami

A thick mat woven of rice stalks, used as flooring.

Tōshōgū

Tokugawa Ieyasu.

tozama daimyō

Less trusted *daimyo* of the outer circle. The *han* in Saikoku (western Japan) were particularly restive.

wajo

A term of respect for a high priest or the head of a temple.